In the Name of Allah,
the All- beneficent, the All- merciful

قال الله تعالى:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذۡهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجۡسَ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡبَيۡتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمۡ تَطۡهِيرًا﴾

Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

(Surat al- Ahzab 33:33).

Prophetic traditions mentioned in both in Sunni and Shi'ah authoritative reference books of *hadith* and *tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur'an) have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively refer to the People of the Cloak [*ahl al- kisa'*], viz. Muhammad, 'Ali, Fațimah, al- Ḥasan, and al- Ḥusayn ('a) as the *Ahl al- Bayt* (People of the Household). For instance, refer to the following references: *Sunni:* Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), *al- Musnad*, 1:231; 4:107; 6:292, 304; *Sahih Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130; Al- Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al.; Al- Dulabi (d. 310 AH), *Al- Dhuriyyah al- Ṭahirah al- Nabawiyyah*, p. 108; Al- Nasa'i (d. 303 AH), *Al- Sunan al- Kubra'*, 5:108; 113; Al- Ḥakim al- Nayshaburi (d. 405 AH), *Al- Mustadrak 'ala' s- Sahihayn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146– 147; Al- Zarkashi (d. 794 AH), *Al- Burhan*, p. 197; Ibn Hajar al- Asqalani (d. 852 AH), *Fath al- Bari Sharh Sahih al- Bukhari*, 7:104.

Shi'ah: Al- Kulayni (d. 328 AH), *Usul al- Kafi*, 1:287; Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), *Al- Imamah wa' t- Tabsirah*, p. 47, *hadith* 29; Al- Maghribi (d. 363 AH), *Da'a'im al- Islam*, pp. 35, 37; Al- Saduq (d. 381 AH), *Al- Khisal*, pp. 403, 550; Al- Ṭusi (d. 460 AH), *Al- Amali*, *hadith* 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following books of *tafsir*: Al- Jassas (d. 370 AH), *Ahkam al- Qur'an*; Al- Wahidi (d. 468 AH), *Asbab al- Nuzul*; Ibn al- Jawzi (d. 597 AH), *Zad al- Masir*; Al- Qurțubi (d. 671 AH), *Al- Jami' Li- Ahkam al- Qur'an*; Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH), *Tafsir*; Al- Tha'labi (d. 825 AH), *Tafsir*; Al- Ṭabari (d. 875 AH), *Tafsir*; Al- Suyuți (d. 911 AH), *Al- Durr al- Manthur*; Al- Shawkani (d. 1250 AH), *Fath al- Qadir*; Al- 'Ayyashi (d. 320 AH), *Tafsir*; Al- Qummi (d. 329 AH), *Tafsir*; Furt al- Kufi (d. 352 AH), *Tafsir* at the margin of the exegesis of *Surat al- Nisa'* verse 59; Al- Ṭabarsi (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al- Bayan*, as well as many other sources.

Paradoxes of Wahhabism

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله:

"إني تاركٌ فيكُمُ الثَقلين: كتاب الله، وعترتي أهلَ بيتي، ما إن تمسكتُم بهما لن تضلوا أبداً وأنَّهُما لَن يَفترقا حتّى يردا عَليَّ الحوض"

The Messenger of Allah (s) said: "Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [thaqalayn]: The Book of Allah and my progeny ['itrati], the members of my Household [Ahl al- Bayt]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [hawḍ] (of Kawthar)."

Some references:

- Al-Ḥakim an-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala's-Sahihayn (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109– 110, 148, 533
- Muslim, As- Sahih, (English translation), book 31, hadiths 5920– 3.
- At-Tirmidhi, As- Sahih, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, hadiths 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219.
- An- Nasa'i, Khasa'is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭalib, hadith 79.
- Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, Al- Musnad, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189– 190.
- Ibn al-'Athir, Jami' al-Usul, vol. 1, p. 277.
- Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa'n-Nihayah, vol. 5, p. 209.
- Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al- Qur'an al- 'Aẓim, vol. 6, p. 199.
- Nasir ad- Din al- Albani, Silsilat al- Ahadith as-Sahihah (Kuwait: Ad- Dar as- Salafiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355– 358.

Paradoxes of Wahhabism

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Preface

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The invaluable legacy of the Household [Ahl al-Bayt] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the Muslim ummah with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of Imams of the Prophet's Household ('a), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well- reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defense of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shi'ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shi'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household ('a) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muhammad (S).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imam al-Mahdi, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to the Ayatollāh Tāheri Khorramābādi for writing the book, and to Zainab Muhammadi Araghi for translating it, as well as to all our honorable colleagues in accomplishing this task especially the dear ones in the Translation Office for performing their responsibility. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation office. ✍

Cultural Affairs Department
The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

Publisher's Preface

The eternal and progressive Islamic doctrine was established by *Allāh* through his beloved messenger as the last and most complete divine doctrine so that the human race can make it their role model to achieve eternal prosperity and everlasting perfection through its sources of knowledge.

But unfortunately, the enemies of Islam have managed to interpret Islam according to the subjective opinions of capricious and impulsive scholars and intellectuals, and then inject certain ailing views and paradoxes as Islamic laws in Islamic societies. They have taken destructive steps towards weakening the Islamic nation, which is to their benefit.

Among these people is "*Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb*"[1], who was able to establish a completely worthless and superstitious religion called "Wahhabism"[2] by following the poisonous and baseless thoughts of his ancestors, "*Ibn Taymiyyah*"[3] and "*Ibn al-Qayyim*".[4] This is a religion that is in complete opposition to the foundations of Islam, and Shiaism that follows the twelve *Imāms*, and has been the cause of many scourges and tragedies and still is.

---

1. *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* «محمّد بن عبدالوهاب» (1703AD-1792AD) was an Arab theologian born in *Najd*, in present-day Saudi Arabia and the most famous scholar of the *Wahhābi* movement..

2. *Wahhabism* «الوهابية» is the name given to the branch of Islam practiced by those who follow the teachings of *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb*, after whom the movement is named. *Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb*. The other name of this school of thought is "Salafism" (Arabic: «سلفي» "predecessors" or "early generations").

3. *Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah* «أحمد بن تيمية» (1263–1328), was a Sunni Islamic scholar born in *Harrān*, located in what is now Turkey, close to the Syrian border. He lived during the troubled times of the Mongol invasions, as a member of the school founded by *Ibn Hanbal*.

4. *Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah* «ابن القيّم الجوزية» (1292–1350CE / 691 AH- 751 AH) was a famous Sunni Hanbali Islamic jurist and commentator of the Qur'an.

The respected author has tried to evaluate and challenge the baseless paradoxes within the beliefs of Wahhabism with clear arguments, using the holy verses, and noble traditions from valid Sunni[1] and Shia sources. He has analysed and clarified the truth according to the requirements of Islam, and left it to the respected readers to judge for themselves. This office is honored to publish the "Confutation to the Paradoxes of Wahhabism" and present it those interested, with the hope that it will be accepted by *Allāh* (s.w.t).

Inshā'a Allāh.

The Islamic Publications Office, Affiliated to
The Society of Scholars of the Islamic Seminary of Qom

1. *Sunni* Muslims are the largest denomination of Islam. They are referred to as *Ahl a1-Sunnah*, the folks of the tradition. The word Sunni comes from the word *Sunnah*, which means the tradition of Prophet *Muhammad* (s).

Author's Preface

The preface of a book usually mentions and explains certain issues related to the aim, motive and structure of the book, together with a brief summary.

In the year 1982, I was appointed by the great leader and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, through a written order, as his Representative in Religious Affairs and Management of the Islamic Seminary[1] in Pakistan. Pursuing this order, we left for that country with a group of erudite scholars.

This took place at the request of the late great scholar *Sayyid Safdar-Ḥusayn Najafi,* when he met *Imām Khomeini* in *Najaf.* After the *Imām*'s departure to France, he went to France to invite him to Pakistan and ask him to send a representative to Pakistan. He sent *Ayatollāh Ansāri* to Pakistan, who stayed there only for a couple of months and returned when the revolution started in Iran.

After the victory of the Islamic revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the request of *Sayyid Safdar-Ḥusayn* and the Islamic Seminary in Pakistan was again forwarded for a fully authorised representative from the *Imām. Sayyid Safdar-Ḥusayn* came to Qom and had a meeting with the *Imām.* Finally, he appointed me as his representative of Religious affairs in Pakistan.

We first faced opposition from the Pakistani government. But after consultation, the Pakistan ministry of foreign affairs issued a temporary travel permit. In January 1983 we left for Pakistan and were accompanied by a group of scholars. We stayed in Karachi for a couple of days in order to meet the Sunni and Shia scholars and visit the Islamic schools in that city. We then went to Lahore which was supposed to be our place of stay. In Lahore, there is a famous school called *Jāmi'at al-Muntadhar,* then under the management of *Sayyid Safdar Ḥusayn.*

---

1. *Al-Hawzah Al-Ilmiyyah.*

We held discussions at the level of *Kharij* on the book of Fasting[1] in the presence of the scholars and teachers of that school for two months. We then returned to Iran and informed the *Imām*, then again returned to Pakistan. The earlier discussions continued for another month. After this, the Pakistani government debarred our residency in Pakistan. Having no choice, we returned to Iran and managed the affairs of the Pakistani Seminaries by choosing as representative, *Ḥujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Ḥalīmi Kāshani*. I was not given the chance to return to Pakistan until 1989. However, during this period *Sayyid Safdar-Ḥusayn* tried to get my residency permit and in 1988 he succeeded in obtaining it.

After a short period, the barriers were removed by the assassination of *Zia-ul-Haq*[2] and the end of martial law, and I left for Pakistan. The gentlemen in Pakistan really insisted that I stay for the whole academic season. Hence I decided to stay for the month of *Ramadān* and a part of the summer season to take care of some affairs.

During the first *Ramadān* (for which I feel I had divine assistance to stay) I got engaged in the exegesis sessions of the short *Sūrah*s[3] of the Holy Qur'an every night at the *Jāmi'at al-Muntadhar*. This was attended by the students and scholars of Lahore. During the day we would perform congregational prayers and hold discussions on Morality.

Soon after the month of *Ramadān* and my return to Iran we faced the heart-rending demise of *Imām Khomeini* (May he reside in God's paradise).

In the second year, during the holy month of *Ramadān*, we started the exegesis of *Sūrah al-Jumua* and *al-Munāfiqūn*. At some stage in those days, we confronted the resentment of "the army of the companions" (*Sipah-e Sahaba*) and their killing of Shias and the insecurity that followed. Having no other option, we held the sessions at home for some of the nights. Considering all these problems and

1. The practice of hiding one's belief under pressure.

2. *Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq* «محمّد ضياء الحقّ» (1924–1988) was the military ruler and later, President of Pakistan from 1977 to 1988. His rule over the country is the longest to date in the history of Pakistan.

3. The term is commonly used to mean a "chapter" of the Holy Qur'an,

insecurities, the students and scholars participated with extreme fervour.

Most regrettably, the great scholar *Sayyid Safdar-Ḥusayn* passed away during my third *Ramadān* trip. Nonetheless, it was in the third *Ramadān* that I realized that it was better to choose those topics for discussion and analysis that the students and scholars needed, and were faced with and involved in, rather than the exegesis of the Qur'an. Thus we decided on Wahhabism and its paradoxes, and the followers of *Ibn Taymiyyah* and *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* for discussion in the three successive *Ramadāns*.

The following topics were discussed:

1. Distortion in the Qur'an: The belief in distortion in the Qur'an is one of the most baseless and unfounded accusation raised against the Shia scholars by some Sunni scholars. As the Qur'an is the eternal and everlasting miracle of the great Prophet of Islam, this accusation is blown up out of proportion. This belief in distortion in the Qur'an has been condemned by great scholars such as *al-Sheikh al-Sadūq, al-Sheikh al-Mufīd*, and *al-Sheikh al-Ṭoūsi*, *al-Sayyid al-Murtadhā* and *al-'Allamah al-Ḥilli* and quite a few other Shia scholars. Numerous works have been written rejecting it. In the present book, we have given rational and textual proof on the non-existence of distortion in the Qur'an and answered the doubts that exist in this regard.

2. Building tombs on graves of the Prophets (a) and the loved ones of God and showing reverence towards them are among the issues that Wahhabis are extremely sensitive towards, and for this reason they have accused the majority of Islamic sects of polytheism.

Ibn Taymiyyah and his student, *Ibn al-Qayyim* and following them *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb,* are the first people who forbade the building of tombs over graves, and the Wahhabis acted upon their verdicts by destroying the existing tombs on graves. This was while the tombs of the Prophets (a), *Imāms* (a) and scholars existed, and even the tomb of *Abū Ḥanīfah*[1] were honoured by all the Islamic

1. *Abū Ḥanīfah An-Nu'man ibn Thabit*: «أبوحنيفة النعمان بن ثابت» (699–767) was one of the most important Islamic scholars. He was a jurist and the founder of the *Hanafi* School of *fiqh*.

sects. In this book, we have dealt with the reason given by the Wahhabis on the *nullity of permission* for building tombs over graves and the *rejection* of these reasons. In between, we have analysed firm historical proofs, Qur'anic and traditional reasons.

3. Performing a pilgrimage to "obtain blessings": Optional Pilgrimages, obtaining blessings, and entreating God for needs through them, and various common acts of reverence among all Muslims, Shia and Sunni, that are performed at the graves of the Prophets (a), *Imāms*(a), the pious ones and even religious scholars, has caused the followers of *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* to accuse Muslims of polytheism-in-worship. In this regard, we have stated the types of monotheism, polytheism and given a clarification of monotheism-in-worship. We then mentioned the reasons for recommended pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) and the pious ones. We have proved the legitimacy and, in some cases, strictly, the recommendatory nature of this act by making the most of verses, traditions and sayings of Sunni and Shia scholars and the lives of the companions.

4. Intercession: One of the issues which has been confronted with extreme opposition by the Wahhabis is the issue of intercession and imploring the Prophet (s) and the *Imāms (a)* for assistance. They argue that intercession is especially for *Allāh,* therefore, seeking intercession is meddling with divine authority and contrary to monotheism. They consider it illegitimate and forbidden, and wrongly compare seeking this intercession with the intercession sought by idol worshippers from idols, and rely on flawed reasons to prove their claims.

We have stated the various types of intercession, clarified the meaning of supplication, and shown how intercession is a type of supplication. By relying on Qur'anic evidence and the various cases of intercession-seeking by the Sunni people, we have theoretically answered the aforementioned paradox.

We also discussed leadership and general authority during the next two *Ramadāns* and decided to discuss the necessary topics. However, in the following years such an accomplishment was not achieved because of the skirmishes and insecurity. The debates were then recorded on a tape and sent to Iran and through the endeavour of the

publication office of the society of scholars, they were transcribed and corrected.

I feel it is necessary to remind the readers of a few points:

1. At the time of these discussions in Pakistan, few resources were available. In addition, we had no intention of printing and publishing them because, with all the engagements we had, there was no chance of analysis and review. Our only objective was to inform the respectable audience about the truth of the situation.

2. The fact that the discussion was oral and then later transcribed must be taken into consideration. Written work widely differs from oral speech.

3. During the mentioned meetings, some questions and answers were also put forward that have not been included in this collection.

At the end, I would like to thank the scholars and everyone who participated in those sessions in whatever way, including those who bore the burden of managing those sessions, especially the great scholar *Ḥujjat al-Islām Ḥafiz-Riadh* and all the gentlemen in *Jāmi'a al-Muntadhar*. May eternal blessings and salutations of *Allāh* (s.w.t) be offered for the soul of the founder and establisher of those sessions; the late *Sayyid Safdar-Ḥusayn*.

I also would like to thank all the gentlemen who cooperated in any way in the research and printing of this collection, especially Mr *Kūrānī,* who took the trouble of studying this collection and later gave me some useful suggestions about the organisation of the content; *Ḥujjat al-Islām Ansārī* and *Ḥujjat al-Islām Delāwar,* for the research and arrangement of these files; the Islamic Publications Office affiliated with the Society of Lectures in the Islamic Seminary of Qom. I pray that *Allāh* will reward them.

Wassalām
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Summer 2004

A brief biography of the founders of the Wahhabi sect

Though Wahhabism is attributed to *Sheikh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb*, the basis of this belief originated from *Ibn Taymiyyah*. Therefore, we must discuss the personality of both characters here: *Ibn Taymiyyah* and *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb*.

1. Ibn Taymiyyah

Ibn Taymiyyah (*Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Halim ibn 'Abd al-Salām ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Taymiyyah*) was born in year 661 A.H in the city of *Harrān* in *Shām*. He was imprisoned three times because of some beliefs and some religious decrees (*Fatwā*s) he had given in a tower in Damascus. He lived for 67 years and never married and left many books and literature behind.

The founder of Wahhabi belief is *Ibn Taymiyyah* and after him, his apprentice, *Ibn al-Qayyim*, is responsible for spreading his beliefs which never found any other supporters. *Ibn Taymiyyah* was a Hanbalite scholar. He was continuously confronted with the opposition of the scholars and intellectuals because he uttered beliefs and views that were against common Muslim beliefs. Books such as: *Al-Darar al-Musiyah fi al-Rad Ala Ibn Taymiyyah* and *Shifa al-Seqam fi Ziyarat Qabri Khayr al-Anam*, and several others were written by Sunni scholars rejecting his beliefs. The legal authorities and some Sunni elders of his time denounced him as a pervert and on some occasions they expressed their anathema for him and called him a heretic. When his views about the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) tomb were presented to the chief judge of that time, he reprimanded and admonished him.

Some beliefs of Ibn Taymiyyah

1. He considered the traditions relating pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) tomb as fabricated.

2. He confirmed the traditions that implied *Allāh* landing on the sky of the world and also believed that, on the Day of Judgment, *Allāh* would come and show himself.

3. He interpreted the verses about the characteristics and coming of *Allāh* literally. He would interpret them without any exegesis or explanation:

﴿وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَٱلْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا﴾

"And your Lord and the angels arrive in ranks."[1]

For example, he believed that *Allāh* is leaning on the throne (on top of the sky) and sometimes descends to the sky of the physical world and then returns again. His beliefs include *Allāh* having bodily parts and organs such as eyes, hands and feet with the difference that they are not similar to the human body parts and organs.

4. Clear statements have been quoted from him regarding *Allāh* being an object, including what has been quoted from *Ibn Batutah* and *Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani*:

"While Ibn Taymiyyah was on the pulpit, he said: Allāh will come down from the sky just like how I am coming down from this pulpit."[2]

Or in another instance where he said:

"Raising hands while praying is a reason that shows Allāh is upwards in direction."[3]

Or in "*Tafsir al-Bahar al-Muhit*": (this is what *Abū Hayan* has quoted)

"I read in the book called al-Arsh, written by Ibn Taymiyyah: 'Allāh is sitting on a chair while he has made a space empty and the Messenger of Allāh is sitting next to him."[1]

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1. *Al-Fajr*, Chapter 89, verse 22.
2. Ibn Battutah (1377), "*Rihlat Ibn Battutah*", p.95; Ibn Hajar al- 'Asqalāni (773AD-852AD), "*al-Dorar al-Kaminah*", Vol. 1, p.154.
3. Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), "*al-Fatwā al-Hamawiyyah al-Kobrā*", p.66; Ibn Taymiyyah "*Sharh Hadith al-Nozūl*", p.59; Yūsuf al-Nabhāni (1265AD-1350AD), "*Shawāhid al-Haq*", 130.

And other statements which indicate the corporeality of *Allāh,* whereas, this belief is against the Qur'an which clearly rejects it, saying:

﴿لَيۡسَ كَمِثۡلِهِۦ شَيۡءٞ﴾

"…Nothing is like Him" [2]

These misleading thoughts and contemplations made the Islamic scholars give the ruling on his apostasy, following which, he was arrested and sent to prison in Egypt. He was taken out of prison a couple of times and after counseling, debating and discussing, they suggested that he repent and abandon such useless beliefs and thoughts. However, he did not agree nor repent. He insisted on his beliefs in such a manner that he was imprisoned in Damascus again and finally lost his life there. The *Ibn Taymiyyah* tumult ended with his death in the year 728 A.H in the Syrian prison.

However, his apprentice *Ibn al-Qayyim* continued the spread of his master's beliefs but did not leave any significant impressions of the beliefs of his master.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was later influenced by the thoughts of *Ibn Taymiyyah*, and revived his thoughts and beliefs. After many years of perseverence, Wahhabism was born. The followers of *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* are called Wahhabis, the roots and origins of their belief, however, are from *Ibn Taymiyyah.*

After nearly five centuries, in the beginning of the thirteenth century A.H., *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* revived the thoughts and beliefs of *Ibn Taymiyyah,* rejecting the issue of corporeality of *Allāh* (anthropomorphism).

2. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was born in the year 1115 A.H. in *Ayenah*, one of the cities of *Najd.* His father was the chief judge of that city. After learning some religious sciences, he went through the

1. Hāji Khalifah (1067AD), "*Kashf al-Zonūn*", Vol. 2, p.1438.
2. *Al-Shura*, Chapter 42, verse 11.

exegesis and traditions, and theological books. He learnt Hanbalite jurisprudence from his father.

In youth, he considered many of the religious acts of people reprehensible and indecent. After the pilgrimage ceremony in a trip to Mecca, he disclaimed imploring the Prophet (s) for assistance by people beside his grave. After returning to *Najd*, he went to Basra and stayed there for a while and started opposing many of the people's actions. As a result, the people of Basra threw him out of their city.

In the year 1143 A.H, he publicly invited people to the new belief, Wahhabism. However, his father, one of the scholars and the chief judge of the city, strongly opposed his thoughts and beliefs. His master and supervisor who considered his sayings and thoughts void, asked people to stop following him. For this reason, a strong fight and dispute took place between him and his father and the people of *Najd*. Inevitably, a group supported him. These disputes and controversies lasted a couple of years until the father of Sheikh *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* passed away in the year 1153 A.H.

After his father, he found the necessary platform to invite people to his religion and started with the ordinary people. He started to negate some people's acts that contradicted his beliefs. Some people submitted to him and his creed gradually thrived, and he became famous.

The chief and the head of the city of *Ayenah* really respected him. He married the chief's sister. The people of *Ayenah,* however, could not tolerate his thoughts and beliefs and even though he was the chief's brother-in-law, they threw him out of the city. He went to the city of *Doreyah*, which is one of the eastern cities of *Najd*. Out of the wonders of the world, this land was previously famous as the land of the *Musaylamah al-Kadhāb* (the liar), because a group of Muslims there had been excommunicated for serious lying. After entering *Doreyah*, he went to visit its chief and ruler, *Mohammad Ibn Masud,* the great grandfather of the Saudi family. In this visit, they agreed to support each other. The Sheikh ensured glory and triumph over Najd to *Mohammad ibn Masud* and he also annointed him with glory and greatness. This is how the relationship between these two began. As a result of this union and agreement, the majority of people in this land followed this sect and the gradual attack of Muslims on other tribes

and other cities in *Najd* began. This was done on the pretext of supporting monotheism and fighting polytheism and impiety. Many wars started in *Najd* and out side *Najd* including *Yemen*, *Hijaz* and *Syria* and *Iraq*. Those who did not agree with the beliefs of Sheikh *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* and were not willing to swear allegiance to him, or would rise against him would be killed. Their wealth would be collected as war booty. They killed hundreds of people in cities and tribes. For example in a village called *Fosul* in the city of *Ahsa*, they killed three hundred people and plundered their wealth.

Sheikh *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* passed away in the year 1206 A.H and his followers carried his beliefs on. For example in the year 1216 A.H, they armed a troop of twenty thousand people and attacked the city of *Karbala*. *Karbala* was then full of Iranians, Turks and Arab pilgrims, which all came under siege. They finally entered that city and killed many of the residents, pilgrims and supporters of the city, and after killing five thousand people or more (up to twenty thousand is quoted), they launched an attack on the treasures of the shrine and plundered all the treasures and precious objects and properties of the shrine. This was in such a way that made poets recite elegies on this gruesome tragedy. A horrible situation appeared in *Karbala* and for more than twenty years, they would raid *Karbala* every now and then and kill people and plunder their wealth. They also launched an attack on the city of Najaf where they faced the resistance of the people and their supporting forces. The detailed story of these tragedies can be found in history books.

The great scholar *Hilli* wrote at the end of the seventh volume of *Meftah al-Keramah,* a book of jurisprudence:

“This part of the book was concluded by the author after the midnight of the ninth night of the holy month of Ramadhan in the year1225 A.H. This was while his heart was worried and nervous because the Anizah Arabs (who were also Wahhabis) had surrounded the perimeter of Najaf and Ḥusayn (a)’s Mausoleum. They had closed all pathways and plundered the pilgrims returning to their lands after the pilgrimage of the middle of Shaban. They killed a large group, the

majority of which were Iranians, and it is said that the number of dead was one hundred and fifty people."[1]

When *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* announced his beliefs, a large group of major Sunni scholars started opposing him. The first person who strongly opposed him was his father, and then his brother, Sheikh *Suleiman ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb,* both Hanbalite scholars. Sheikh *Suleiman* wrote a book titled, *Al-Sawāiq al-Ilāhiyyah fi al-Rad 'Alā al-Wahhābiyyah* and rejected his brother's beliefs in this book. He says in a brief and comprehensive statement to define Wahhabism and its founder:

"Today, people are suffering from a person who ascribes his beliefs to the Book and customs and makes conclusions using their sciences, and he is not afraid of any body opposing him. Whoever opposes him is considered a polytheist by him. [2] He does not have a single attribute of the people of intellectual efforts, rather, not even one tenth of those attributes and characteristics exist in him. At the same time however, his words have spread among a major group of ignorant and unlearned people**.**"[3]

'Abbas Mahmoud 'Iqad says:

"The main adversary of Sheikh Mohammad was his brother Sheikh Suleiman, the author of Al-Sewaq al-Elahiyah."

"Sheikh Suleiman rejects his brothers' words and says that the points that Wahhabis consider the cause of polytheism and impiety and make them an excuse for taking away the life and wealth of Muslims, existed at the time of the Imams of Islam, but no one has heard or narrated anything from any of the Imams in which they have expressed anathema on the performance of such acts or ordered fighting them or even calling this Islamic land the land of polytheism and the place of impiety."

Uqad calls the Muslim Caliphs and rulers the Imams of Islam.

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1. Jawad al-'Amili (1226AD), "*Miftah al-Karamah*", Vol.7, p.653.
2. Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, "*al-Sawāiq al-Ilāhiyyah fi al-Rad 'Alā al-Wahhābiyyah*", p.4.
3. Ibid

The first rejection written from the side of Sunni scholars on the beliefs of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was *Al-Sawāiq al-Elahiyyah fi al-Rad 'ala al-Wahhābiyyah* by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's brother, Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. The first book written from the side of Shia scholars on the rejection of Wahhabism beliefs was *Minhaj al-Rashād* by the late Sheikh Ja'far, Kashif al-Ghitā. Other literacy criticisms in this regard were written after him.

PART 1
MONOTHEISM & POLYTHEISM

– *Monotheism and polytheism in worship*

– *The importance of unity-in-worship*

– *Justification for angels prostrating before Prophet Adam (a)*

– *Permission of pilgrimage to the Mausoleum of the Messenger of Allāh(s)*

– *Permission of the journey to visit the Messenger of Allāh(s)*

– *The permission of visting the graves of the faithful*

– *Permission to visit graves for women*

– *The permissibility to celebrate, commemorate and seek blessings*

Monotheism and polytheism in worship

One act that is criticized by the *Wahhabis* regarding all Muslims and not only Shias is the pilgrimage to graves; kissing or touching the shrine (to attain blessings from it), seeking blessings, and the various ways in which Muslims pay their respects to the Prophets (a), Imams (a), saints, pious ones and scholars, at their graves, throughout history in all ages and places. This is, of course, not particular to Shias. For example, in Egypt, there is a great place called *Ra's al-Ḥusayn* (a) and a court by the name of *Zainab* (a), which is a shrine and a court visited by not only Shias, but non-Shias also. I went to *Syria* once and from there I went to Egypt. In those days the *Ra's al-Ḥusayn* (a) and the Shrine of *Zainab* (a) there were more magnificent than those in *Syria*. There were very few Shias there and the non-Shias also came and kissed the shrine and rubbed their hands on it. The Wahhabis consider such form of paying respect and showing affection and kindness as polytheism, and say that they should be prohibited.

Briefly, there are a series of rituals that most Sunnis and Shias carry out at the graves of the Prophets (a), the Imams (a), the pious ones and the scholars, which is a way of showing courtesy and respect, which Wahhabis do not consider permissible and regard as polytheism.

To clarify the basis of discussion, we must first specify the limits and boundaries of monotheism, polytheism, worship and affairs other than worship to understand whether such deeds carried out by Muslims are polytheistic or not.

Types of Monotheism and polytheism

Just as Monotheism has various categories, polytheism also has several categories. The categories of monotheism are as follows:

A) Unity of divine essence

Unity in the essence means *Allāh* the Almighty has no like or anything similar and is without a parallel. In other words, we do not have two necessary existents - *Allāh* is indivisible. He is not a compound of attributes. The Attributes form His Essence. This means all kinds of compounds are remote from Him, including mental and intellectual. He is also not limited by any boundaries. There are numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an that point to the unity of Divine Essence, such as:

﴿قُلۡ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ﴾

"Say: He is Allāh, the One."[1]

Or:

﴿هُوَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِي لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلۡمَلِكُ ٱلۡقُدُّوسُ ٱلسَّلَٰمُ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُ ٱلۡمُهَيۡمِنُ ٱلۡعَزِيزُ ٱلۡجَبَّارُ ٱلۡمُتَكَبِّرُۚ سُبۡحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشۡرِكُونَ﴾

"He is Allāh, there is no god except Him; the Sovereign, the All-holy, the All-benign, the Securer, the All-conserver, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-magnanimous. Clear is Allāh of any partners that they may ascribe to Him."[2]

In previous years, we discussed the holy verse *"Say: He is Allāh, the One,"*[3] and said that there is polytheism in essence confronting unity of divine essence. It is not clear whether there were any groups among the ancient tribes and nations who believed in two necessary existents. However, it is attributed to the Zoroastrians that they had such a belief and said: 'We have two necessary existents: one entity is the creator of light and the other is the creator of darkness.'

Of course this is analysable and one must further investigate this to see whether they believed in two necessary existents (or two creators

1. *Al-Ikhlas*, Chapter 112, verse 1.
2. *Al-Hashr*, Chapter 59, verse 23.
3. ﴿أَحَدٌ ٱللَّهُ هُوَ قُل﴾.

of light and darkness) or briefly did they believe in the duality of creator or the duality in entity?

B) Unity in attributes

Allāh has two types of attributes:

1– Essential attributes.

2– Active attributes.

For example, knowledge (*'Ilm*) and power (*Qudrah*) are among the essential attributes, and being the Creator (*Khāliq*) and the Dispenser of all sustenance (*Rāziq*), etc., are among the active attributes of *Allāh*. The essential attributes are His essential reality. Dualism and polarity do not exist in His essential attributes. But the attributes of human beings are other than their essence. For example, when we are born, we are illiterate and lack wisdom, then we educate ourselves later. This shows that there is a distinct separation between our essence and our knowledge. Our essence and our knowledge are two separate things. This, however, does not apply to *Allāh*. Since eternity, Knowledge and Power are the essence of *Allāh*. They were never separate from Him and never will be.

In fact, He is a limitless Reality which includes life, power and knowledge in such a way that no duality and diversity exists among them, and duality and the difference in attributes are mental concepts. This means the concepts of the Knower (*'Ālim*), the Powerful (*Qadir*) and the Eternally Living (*Ḥay*) are diverse. But in actual reality these attributes and the essence are one. The concepts are many, but the Referent is One, just as Imam *Ali* (a) says in this regard:

«...وَكَمَالُ تَوْحِيدِهِ اَلْإِخْلاَصُ لَهُ وَكَمَالُ اَلْإِخْلاَص لَهُ نَفْيُ اَلصِّفَاتِ عَنْهُ لِشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ صِفَةٍ أَنَّهَا غَيْرُ اَلْمَوْصُوفِ وَشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ مَوْصُوفٍ أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ اَلصِّفَةِ... »

"…and the perfection of believing in His monotheism is to regard Him Pure, and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which

it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute..." [1]

This is the Unity of Divine Attributes. Therefore, those who have not been able to properly digest and understand these scientific and philosophical intricacies have lost the way and believe in dissimilitude and variance in the attributes of *Allāh.* Of course, some of the pre-Islamic philosophers (not the modern philosophers) held such void views.

C) Divine unity in creation

The third level is to consider the Creator of the whole universe to be one. Of course there is no doubt in the presence of causes and agents in this vast universe that influence one another. However all the causes and agents depend on *Allāh* and all these influences and impacts originate from Him. Nothing is brought into existence without His will and authority and no cause or effect takes place. For example, to destroy a certain infectious disease, doctors used plants and vegetation through some physical and chemical changes. They make a substance called antibiotic which has an excellent and profound effect on destroying an infectious disease. It must be said that *Allāh* is the ultimate cause. That plant and the man who made the medicine from the plant and the effect of medicine itself have all been brought into existence by *Allāh* and they are all His created beings. Thus there is no contradiction in saying we believe in causes and agents and primes. And at the same time all these are solely dependent on the Unique Creator and not independent. For example man writes using his hand with a pencil. The writing can be ascribed to both the pen and man. With regards to the causes and primes in this world it is possible to ascribe any phenomena to far and near causes and primes, whereas, all these are *Allāh's* actions and the agents are not independent; it is actually a man performing the action. However only by the will of *Allāh* can this man be the performer. Thus, the man whose life has been taken away by *Allāh,* cannot do anything because everything depends on *Allāh* and nothing takes place without His will.

1. Nahj al-Balagha: sermon 1.

"If the world's blade moves from its place, / It will cut no veins if Allāh does not permit."[1]

Thus, *Allāh* is the creator of everything; the creator of the pen, ink and even man through whom the act of writing becomes possible. The Creator of all these is *Allāh. Allāh* has created the sun and has also bestowed effectuality to it. *Allāh* has also created man and given him free will and authority for carrying out some things. These, however, are not independent of *Allāh* in their jobs. Therefore when you want to stand up during prayer you say:

Be houlillahi quvatehi aqumo wa aqud

I stand up and sit down by the power and strength of Allāh.

Thus, all the causes, effect, agents and actions of this world are under His will:

«.. بِهِ قَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَ الْأَرْضُ.. »

"Because of Him, the sky and the earth stand firm." [2]

He is independent, immutable needless of others, and is the absolute Self-Sufficient. All the agents are, however, in need of Him. Everything is His shadow, like an object which makes a shadow in the sun. This shadow depends on the object. If this object is not there, there will no longer be any shadows. Similarly, the whole universe, all the causes and agents are His shadow. Thus the teachings of all Prophets (a), intellect and thought, the effects of the causes and agents, confirm that these causes and agents are not independent and needless. They have no existence of their own. Their effectiveness is not from themselves. They are all dependent on Him. This is unity in creation or the unity of divine actions. You see the Qur'an turning to this issue in many verses:

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1. «اگر تیغ عالم بجنبد ز جای نبرد رگی تا نخواهد خدای»

2. Bihar al-Anwar: Vol. 87, P128.

﴿ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمۡۖ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَۖ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ فَٱعۡبُدُوهُۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ وَكِيلٞ﴾

"*That is Allāh, your Lord; there is no god except Him, the Creator of all things; so worship Him. He watches over all things*"[1]

This means *Allāh* is the Creator of everything. He is even the Creator of what I am doing right now. Of course I am acting out of my free will. But I am from Him, the effect I have is from Him, He is the life giver of everything and the originator of every phenomena.

Opposed to this type of unity/ monotheism in creation is "*polytheism in creation*". If someone believes that there is besides *Allah*, a needless, essentially independent creature that does not need a creator for existence, or any action in this universe and the creation system, he would be a polytheist who believes in a partner with *Allāh.* Someone who believes that doctors or the medications which cure man are independent in their acts and effects has beliefs similar to the *Mu`tazilites* (the separatists), who believe that *Allāh* has created this world, akin to a construction worker who constructs a building and goes off to his business afterwards. Man has complete independence in all his acts and no longer has any need for *Allāh*and is not a creature that works *by His power and strength* any more. According to the *Mu`tazillites* belief, this is monotheism.

On the contrary, *Asharites* believe that causes and agents have no effect. *Allāh* does everything and there are no causes or agents involved. However, it is *Allāh's* habit to create phenomenon following causes and means without any effect from the cause. It is like somebody having the habit of wearing a red hat when he goes out and a green hat when he is at home. *Allāh's* habit intends to burn the hand of man with fire and does that with that certain cause. They have basically negated the effect of causes and means completely. The *Mu`tazilites* have fallen into the other side of the slough of monotheism.

1. *Surah al-An`ām*, Chapter 6, verse 102.

Briefly, if someone has such beliefs, it would be considered monotheism in creation. There were such people, who considered the creator of darkness separate from the creator of light. Such a belief is contrary to monotheism-in-creation. Therefore a monotheist is someone who only considers *Allāh* as the Creator and at the same time believes the causes and means to be effective but by the will and authority of *Allāh.*

D) Unity in governance and divine lordship

The majority of pagans acknowledge that *Allāh* is the Creator. *Allāh* says:

﴿وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ ٱللَّهُ ۚ قُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

"If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" they will surely say, "Allāh" Say, "All praise belongs to Allāh!" Yet most of them do not know" [1]

Most pagans also considered *Allāh* to be the Creator of everything. However they said that after *Allāh* created, He entrusted the management to angels, jinns, and spiritual entities who became incharge of the world. For example they said that a spirit was incarnated in a certain star and that very spirit was administering a part of the world's affairs and another spirit was incarnated into the sun and was managing another part of the world's affairs.

Then they thought that since they could not reach the sun and the moon and the star to worship them. They should make idols and statues of them, revere them and hold them in high esteem.

At present, such idol-worship continues in *India*. They have a statue of sustenance and livelihood, another of the sun, moon and the stars, and another for farming, etc. All this is polytheism in governance and divine lordship. There are numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an which strongly proclaims unity-in-lordship to people. One such verse says:

1. *Surah Loqmān*, Chapter 31 verse 25.

﴿يَـٰصَـٰحِبَيِ ٱلسِّجۡنِ ءَأَرۡبَابٞ مُّتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيۡرٌ أَمِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلۡوَٰحِدُ ٱلۡقَهَّارُ﴾

"…Are different masters better, or Allāh, the One, the All-paramount?" [1]

Unity in divine lordship and governance means man must consider the management of affairs to be solely in the hands of *Allāh*. We previously indicated that some affairs in the world may influence and effect one another but to be intellectually and philosophically precise, it must be said that all these go back to *Allāh*. For example, a country has government servants and other management agents who manage the country together, but all managers and agents do not have complete independence in their jobs but work according to the dictates of a leader. This can be applied to the system of the universe. Some affairs are taken care of by some people but none of them are independent. For example, *Allāh* says in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿ٱللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى ٱلۡأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوۡتِهَا﴾

"Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death…,"[2]

In another place He says:

﴿حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلۡمَوۡتُ تَوَفَّتۡهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمۡ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ﴾

"…When death approaches anyone of you, our messengers take him away and they do not neglect [their dut y]" [3]

These two verses have no contradiction what so ever with one another because in fact one who takes life is truly *Allāh* even though it may be through His messengers.

E) Unity in worship

The intended meaning of unity-in-worship is that worship is exclusive to *Allāh*, and all Muslims have a consensus on this principle and the

1. *Surah Yousuf*, Chapter 12 verse 39.
2. *Surah al-Zumar*, Chapter 39 verse 42.
3. *Surah al-An`ām*, Chapter 6 verse 61.

Prophets *(a)* invited people to it. If there is any difference among Muslims, it is a minor one and is upon some instance of worship and not upon major issues.

The Wahhabis have stated two types of *Tawhid* (unity): the first type is unity-in-lordship (*Tawhid Robubi*) and the second type is divine unity (*Tawhid al-wahy*). They have interpreted "unity in lordship" as believing in the Oneness of the Creator and "divine unity" as unity-in-worship. They insist that "unity-in-lordship" is not enough and one must also believe in divine unity because the pagan Arabs believed in unity of divine lordship and creation but they did not believe in divine unity so they were considered polytheists by the Holy Qur'an.

Here it is necessary to note that unity in divine lordship and management of affairs is different from unity in creation, and pagans mostly did not believe in the unity of divine lordship, but they believed in unity-of-creation.

Anyway, what is important is that we analyse the meaning of worship and the difference between it and bowing and honouring.

F) Unity in legislations and divine legislations

Another type of unity (*Tawhid*) is to consider order and law the exclusive right and authority of *Allāh,* unless He has entrusted this to a person and has given him the permission to judge and make laws. The verse:

﴿مَا تَعۡبُدُونَ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَسۡمَآءٖ سَمَّيۡتُمُوهَآ أَنتُمۡ وَءَابَآؤُكُم مَّآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ بِهَا مِن سُلۡطَٰنٍۚ إِنِ ٱلۡحُكۡمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِۚ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعۡبُدُوٓاْ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلۡقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكۡثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعۡلَمُونَ﴾

"You do not worship, besides Him, but [mere] names that you and your fathers have coined, for which Allāh has not sent down any authority. Sovereignty belongs only to Allāh. He has commanded you

to worship none except Him. That is the upright religion, but most people do not know" [1]

And other verses in the Qur'an imply that commanding and making laws belong to *Allāh.*

G) Unity in governorship and ruling

This means the guardianship and governorship of the society are specific to *Allāh,* as specified by the following verses in the Qur'an:

﴿أَمِ ٱتَّخَذُواْ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوۡلِيَآءَۖ فَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلۡوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ يُحۡيِ ٱلۡمَوۡتَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٞ﴾

"…It is Allāh who is the Guardian…"[2]

H) Unity in obedience

This implies that obedience is exclusive to *Allāh.* It is not obligatory to obey any man unless *Allāh* commands his obedience; for example, the Messenger of God (s) and the infallible Imams (a), or any other person that *Allāh* has ordered mankind to obey.

1. *Surah Yosuf*, Chapter 12 verse 40.
2. *Surah Shura*, Chapter 42 verse 9.

The importance of unity-in-worship

Unity-in-worship is among the important heavenly teachings which the Prophets (a) have paid special attention to in their mission. It has been mentioned as the reason for sending the Messenger (s) in parts of some verses such as:

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن قَبۡلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيٓ إِلَيۡهِ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعۡبُدُونِ﴾

"We did not send any apostle before you but we revealed to him that "There is no god except me; so worship me" [1]

And:

﴿قُلۡ يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ تَعَالَوۡاْ إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٖ سَوَآءِۭ بَيۡنَنَا وَبَيۡنَكُمۡ أَلَّا نَعۡبُدَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ وَلَا نُشۡرِكَ بِهِۦ شَيۡـٔٗا﴾

"Say," O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allāh, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him…"[2]

The issue of polytheism-in-worship has been the object of attention more than other types of polytheism. In fact, it has been given more attention than the unity of the Creator. The majority of verses about fighting the pagans are related to this type of polytheism. The reason for this is that proving *Allāh* as the Creator has been less the object of doubt and hesitation

﴿قَالَتۡ رُسُلُهُمۡ أَفِي ٱللَّهِ شَكّٞ فَاطِرِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ﴾

"…Is there any doubt about Allāh, the originator of the heavens and the earth?! …"[3]

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1. *Surah al-Anbia,* Chapter 21 verse 25.
2. *Surah al-Emran,* Chapter 3, verse 64.
3. *Surah Ibrahim,* Chapter 14, verse 10.

﴿وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ ٱللَّهُ﴾

"If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" they will surely say," Allāh...."[1]

The issue of *Allah (swt)* being the sole creator has been a definite and clear affair, but the polytheism that they were mostly entangled with was polytheism-in-worship and reverence. Those who believed in two separate creators of Goodness and evil, light and darkness, or respected the influence of a person rather than *Allāh* on the management of affairs, would inevitably encounter polytheism in their worship.

For the moment, we intend to talk about worship and its reality. Once its reality and characteristics are recognized, it must be made exclusive to *Allāh.*

What is worship?

The linguists have stated various meanings for the word *worship.* Some lexicographers have said worship means courtesy and abasement[2]. That is to say man makes a gesture of lowliness and courtesy. Some other lexicographers have interpreted worship as "*Ghayat al-Khoḍū,*"[3] or absolute courtesy. Some others have defined worship as *obedience.*[4] All these definitions are general definitions but not the true definition. The worship which crosses the boundary between unity and polytheism has a certain meaning.

Throughout history, there have been and there still are in the present age people who express courtesy and humility towards some others either by words or actions. But the question is: Is this worship or not?

There are two topics at hand, one is whether courtesy and lowliness is worship or not and the second is whether courtesy and lowliness is permissible or not? We said that not every courtesy and lowliness is worship. It used to be a tradition that when someone went to a king, he would be courteous towards him and at the same time no one

1. *Surah Loqman,* Chapter 31, verse 25.
2. Ibn Fāris (395AD), "*Lisān al-Arab*", Vol.9, p.10.
3. "*Majma' al-Bahrain*", 3/92; "*Mu'jam al-Foroq al-lughawyyah*", 349.
4. *Lisan al-Arab*:9/11; *Taj al-Arus*: 5/83.

would say that he has worshipped the king. The other example is what a devotee does for his devoted or what a lover does for his beloved or what an ignorant person does for this world, no one calls any of these worship. He pays courtesy but none of the actions are considered worship.

The equivalent of the word "*Ibadah*" in English is worship. Paying homage is never interpreted as worship and veneration. Besides, in some noble verses, *Allāh* calls on us, the faithful, to be modest towards our parents. Does this mean we have to worship and venerate our parents?

This is absolutely and definitely not what *Allāh* is intending because *Allāh* never invites people to polytheism and the worship of other than Himself, but He commands us to show respect towards parents in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿وَٱخۡفِضۡ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ ٱلذُّلِّ مِنَ ٱلرَّحۡمَةِ وَقُل رَّبِّ ٱرۡحَمۡهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرٗا﴾

"Lower the wing of humility to them, out of mercy, and say, "My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they reared me when I was a small [child] "" [1]

Or in another place, where He says:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَن يَرۡتَدَّ مِنكُمۡ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَسَوۡفَ يَأۡتِي ٱللَّهُ بِقَوۡمٖ يُحِبُّهُمۡ وَيُحِبُّونَهُۥٓ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ يُجَٰهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوۡمَةَ لَآئِمٖۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضۡلُ ٱللَّهِ يُؤۡتِيهِ مَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"O you who have faith! Should any of you desert his religion, Allāh will soon bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, [who will be] humble towards the faithful, stern towards the faithless, waging jihad in the way of Allāh, not fearing the blame of any blamer. That is

1. *Surah al-Isra,* Chapter 17, verse 24.

Allāh's grace which He grants to whomever He wishes, and Allāh is all-bounteous, all-knowing." [1]

In this noble verse, *Allāh* clearly says that if those who have faith become heretic and apostatize, *Allāh* will bring another nation instead of them who are humble before the faithful and tenacious towards the faithless. What is meant by *Adhellah* here is to be humble in front of the faithful. Here *Allāh* does not mean that they should worship the faithful because not every homage and humility is counted as worship.

In Madina, a man humbled himself before the Prophet's (s) Mausoleum by kissing the shrine. The Hijazi officer (policeman) reproached him saying: 'You have become a pagan! Why did you kiss the shrine of the Prophet (s)?' The man answered: 'Do you have a wife?' The officer replied: 'Yes.' He then asked: 'Do you kiss your wife?' 'Yes.' The man continued: 'Then you are a pagan too, because you have kissed your wife.'

Therefore kissing is not polytheism in itself. Those who kiss the doors and walls of the shrine of the Prophet (s), or the Imams (a), do not have the intention of worship and veneration but are rather paying their respect and being courteous. It is natural and instinctive that if a person is fond of someone, he will pay respect and courtesy to him and will humble himself before him.

Some people bow and even prostrate in front of kings and rulers. There is no intention of worship in this bowing and prostration even though in our view, venerating someone other than *Allāh* by prostrating is prohibited. However, this act cannot be called worship especially when the performer is not doing this with the intention of worship.

There are two cases in the holy Qur'an where *Allāh* has mentioned prostration for man and none of them have been condemned. One is the prostration of angels before Prophet Adam (a) which took place by the command of *Allāh* and the other is the prostration of the parents of Prophet Yusuf (a). We have quoted the following verses mentioning these two stories from the holy Qur'an :

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1. *Surah al-Ma'edah,* Chapter 5, verse 54.

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ ٱسْجُدُوا۟ لِـَٔادَمَ فَسَجَدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَٱسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ﴾

"And when we said to the angels," Prostrate before Adam'; so they all prostrated, save Iblis; he refused, and waxed proud, and so he became one of the faithless." [1]

And

﴿فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا۟ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ ءَاوَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ٱدْخُلُوا۟ مِصْرَ إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ءَامِنِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾ .وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا۟ لَهُۥ سُجَّدًا ۖ وَقَالَ يَـٰٓأَبَتِ هَـٰذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُءْيَـٰىَ مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّى حَقًّا﴾

*"So, when they entered unto Joseph, he took his father and mother into his arms saying, Enter you into Egypt, if God will, in security * And he lifted his father and mother upon the throne; and the others fell down prostrating before him. 'See, Father,' he said, 'this is the interpretation of my vision of long ago; my Lord has made it come true."* [2]

The prostration in these two verses is certainly not worship, for had it been, the conclusion would be that all the angels became pagans, except Satan, who did not prostrate, or, in the second verse, God forbid, we are saying that Prophet Ya'qub (a) and his wife became pagans because they prostrated before Prophet Yusuf (a), whereas, it is definitely not so. As we said before, even if abasement and homage is shown in the form of prostration, it is not counted as worship.

In the Persian language, the lover usually says to his beloved: "I will go around you." This sentence does not mean worshipping. Also, in some places, there was a tradition that when a person, adored by people, would get sick and become bed-ridden, and all hope of health gone, some people would come and go around him, offering themselves as sacrifice for him. This going around the patient was

1. *Surah al-Baqarah,* Chapter 2, verse 34.
2. *Surah Yusuf,* Chapter 12, verse 99-100.

certainly not a sign of worship, and we can't say they worshipped the patient.

Those who get the blessing of going to Hajj, one of their obligations is to go around the Ka'bah seven times and perform "circumambulation". It is also recommended that one stand in front of the black stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*) and kiss it. The Prophet (s) even used to do this and use to kiss *Hajar al-Aswad* and rub his blessed hand over it. So do we worship the Ka'bah and *Hajar al-Aswad*? It is compulsory or recommended so have we worshipped someone other than God? Or have we worshipped *Allāh* through these acts and not *Hajar al-Aswad* or the Ka'bah? These are all *Allāh's* commands. Hence whatever acts *Allāh* orders is not polytheism and not counted as worship, just as the prostration of angels before Prophet Adam (a) did not mean worshipping him but a kind of paying respect and homage towards him.

Justification for angels prostrating before Prophet Adam (a)

We said that the angels were ordered by *Allāh* to prostrate before Prophet Adam (a). We will now discuss this prostration as justified.

The prostration of angels before Prophet Adam (a) was not the common prostration as we know it. They did not prostrate to him until they were ordered to show the zenith of humility and abasement towards him. However, *Allāh* called for prostration because it implies the zenith of humility.

This view is not acceptable because apparently, we observe that the prostration intended is the common prostration. If the objective was only to pay respect, the verse would have said so. Why has the term "*isjid*" (Prostrate!) been used? Also, the apparent meaning of Isjidu is prostration, placing ones forehead on the ground. We cannot assume a meaning other than the apparent meaning without there being any evidence.

In addition to this, it is mentioned in many narrations that when a servant prostrates for *Allāh*, Satan moans and cries and says: "Woe on me! They submit to *Allāh* for *Allāh* and by His command, but I objected and disobeyed." Thus it is clear that the intended meaning of *Isjidu* was the commonly understood one.

The angels were ordered to make Prophet Adam (a) their *Qiblah* and prostrate before him just as we pray in the direction of the *Ka'bah* as our *Qiblah*.

This has been rejected by Imam Khomeini in his book *Kashf al-Asrar*, and *Ayatūllah Kho'ei* in his book *Al-Rad al-Bayan*. This is because it is apparent from the image of some verses and narrations that when *Allāh* asked Satan: 'What stopped you from prostrating?' Satan said:

﴿قَالَ أَنَاْ خَيۡرٞ مِّنۡهُ خَلَقۡتَنِي مِن نَّارٖ وَخَلَقۡتَهُۥ مِن طِينٖ﴾

"….I am better than him, "he said." You created me from fire and You created him from clay." [1]

If prostration for Adam was because He had made him their *Qiblah,* there would be no reason for Satan to refuse to prostrate before him As that did not infer the superiority and supremacy of Adam (a) over the prostrators, therefore leaving Satan no room for objection nor offering his reason for disobedience. The prostration was for Adam (a) and not for the fact that he had been made their *Qiblah.*

The Wahhabis believe there is no problem in prostrating in obedience to the command of *Allāh* or whatever is carried out by His order. It is not forbidden since this was a worship that *Allāh* ordered and obedience to His command is not polytheism but rather the exact essence of worship. Circumambulation around Ka'bah and kissing *Hajar al-Aswad* are also worship because *Allāh* has ordered it and, therefore, they have no problem and no one becomes a polytheist for doing so[2].

However, the reasoning of the Wahhabis is incorrect because if the prostration for Adam (a) and circumambulation around Ka'bah and kissing *Hajar al-Aswad,* all other than *Allāh,* are worship, the worship and reverence of other than *Allāh* would be permissible and not polytheism. However, *Allāh* will never transform polytheism into worship.

﴿قُلۡ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَأۡمُرُ بِٱلۡفَحۡشَآءِۖ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ﴾

"…"Say," Indeed Allāh does not enjoin indecencies. Do you attribute to Allāh what you do not know?" [3]

Thus, if we say the prostration of angels before Prophet Adam (a) or the parents before Yusuf (a) were worship, then we must accept that they committed polytheism because they worshipped other than *Allāh.* The meaning of worship will not change even if *Allāh* orders,

1. *Surah A`raf,* Chapter 7, verse 12.
2. Wahhabi doctrine: 214-215.
3. *Surah A`raf,* Chapter 7, verse 28.

yet, *Allāh* never calls his servants to polytheism or worship of other than Himself. He says in the holy Qur'an:

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"Indeed Allāh does not forgive that any partner should be ascribed to Him, but He forgives anything besides that to whomever He wishes….."[1]

How is it possible, that polytheism being the reason of *Allāh's* anger and wrath, would be allowed anywhere?

If man pays homage and abases himself before a person with the intention of perceiving him as being his God and Lord, it would naturally be considered worship.

The reason why *Allāh* denounces and blames the acts of the pagans in various verses of the holy Qur'an, is that they prostrated before idols and perceived them as their Lord. Even if they considered them creators of only a part of the world's affairs, it was polytheism.

Prostration and worship is only permissible for the true Possessor of everything of the servant; his life, death, sustenance, health and fitness, joy and sorrow, etc. If He desires, he lives, and if not, he will not. Homage, prostration and abasement for such a possessor, with the intention of Him being his Lord and God is worship. This is what we have been taught as being the worship and veneration of *Allāh.*

If *Allāh* commands us to prostrate before a person, obeying Him is compulsory. But as long as *Allah (swt)* has not compelled us, one must not prostrate before another human or any other living creature even if that prostration does not carry the intention of worship. The dignity and honor of man is guarded through this, and abasement and humiliation up to this level is prohibited.

There is also another probability in which one may claim that the prostration for other than *Allāh* is forbidden exclusively to man and does not include the angels, therefore, their prostration for Adam (a) was not an exception.

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1. *Surah al-Nisa*, Chapter 4, verse 48.

A word from the late Kashif al-Gheta'

The late *Kashif al-Ghetta'* in his book *Minhaj al-Rashad* which is the refutation of the thoughts and beliefs of *Ibn Taymiyyah,* has said:

"There is no doubt that what is understood as worship must not be performed for other than Allāh. Whoever performs such an act for other than Allāh will become a polytheist. Of course, this does not include common humility (which humans show towards each other), for had this been the case, then every servant or worker who showed humility towards his master or employee would be considered a polytheist. Yet worse than this, we must accept that the great Prophet who showed humility towards his son, God forbid, became a polytheist, whereas such a form of humility is definitely not considered worship."[1]

Considering what we have said up to now, worship consists of verbal or physical humility which originates from believing in the Lordship of the Creator.

All the pagans in the age of ignorance (whether Arab or non-Arab) believed that their objects of worship were deities and lords who controlled their affairs, and, furthermore, believed in different gods for separate affairs of their lives.. This is where their polytheism lay.

We have numerous verses in the holy Qur'an that say worship must only be for *Allāh* and none other, and consider worship for another, polytheistic. Some such verses are as follows:

A)

﴿يَـٰقَوْمِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَـٰهٍ غَيْرُهُۥٓ﴾

"….O my people, worship Allāh! You have no other god besides Him….."[2]

1. «لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْء».

2. *Surah al-Aaraf,* Chapter 7, verse 59.

B)

﴿وَقَالَ ٱلۡمَسِيحُ يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمۡۖ﴾

"….But the Messiah had said," O Children of Israel! Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord. ….."[1]

C)

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمۡ فَٱعۡبُدُوهُۗ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٞ مُّسۡتَقِيمٞ﴾

"Indeed Allāh is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him. This is a straight path." [2]

D)

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمۡ فَٱعۡبُدُوهُۚ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٞ مُّسۡتَقِيمٞ﴾

"Indeed Allāh is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him. This is a straight path." [3]

In all these verses, worship is for the Creator, Supreme Deity and God. *Allāh* says to the idol worshippers that these icons and idols that they have made for themselves and worship and prostrate before neither created them, nor will they gain anything from them. They do not provide their sustenance nor repel their calamities.

﴿وَإِلَٰهُكُمۡ إِلَٰهٞ وَٰحِدٞ﴾

"Your god is the One God…"[4]

Therefore, when people who show respect for the pure Imams (a), kiss their shrines and pay homage to them, they are not worshipping them and such an act is not forbidden for such as act is being performed with the intention of showing respect for their high positions. They are never considered as God. Even the laymen do not

1. *Surah al-Ma'edah,* Chapter 5, verse 72.
2. *Surah al-Emran,* Chapter 3, verse 51.
3. *Surah Zokhrof,* Chapter 43, verse 64.
4. *Surah Baqarah,* Chapter 2, verse 163.

show humility with such an intention. They do so merely to show respect to the Prophet (s) and the pure Imams (a), and recognize the Ahlulbayt (household) as the servants of the All Merciful *Allāh*. There is no Shia that would say *Abū 'Abdilllāh al- Ḥusayn* or *Abū al-Fadl al-'Abbās* are his lords and deities, therefore he pays homage to them in humility. Rather, when he stands before the pure grace of the Prophet (s) this is what he says:

"I bear witness that Mohammad is the servant and Messenger of Allāh… and you served as the servant of Allāh until that which was certain (death) came upon you"[1]

Or when he stands before the pure grave of *Amir al-mo`minin (a)*, this is what he says:

"I bear witness that you made the utmost effort, in the cause of Allāh, acted upon his book and followed the way and life of the Prophet(s)…."[2]

We, who are devoted to the sinless and pure Ahlulbayt (a), say the likes of the above sentences when we stand by their graves. Even the common people who may not be as literate also whisper the above sentences.

Allāh has repeatedly praised the holy Prophet (s), the one who tolerated a lot of hardship, troubles and sufferings for the sake of reviving the religion of *Allāh* and suffered hardship throughout his life to guide and advise the people to the way of *Allāh*. All the Prophets (a) experienced great sufferings and were always in hardship and toil. Some of the Prophets (a) even sacrificed their lives in the way of *Allāh*. One was chopped into two and the other was made homeless and another was tied to a tree. They chopped the head of Prophet Yahya (a). The rest of the Prophets (a) all experienced torment and torture for the sake of propagating the religion of *Allāh*. Thus, if we pay respect and show humility towards them and the Ahlulbayt (a), it is in fact paying respect and showing humility before *Allāh*. If we show courtesy to *Abū 'Abdilllāh al-Ḥusayn* (a) and recite his visitational greetings (*Ziarat*) repeatedly, it is because he sacrificed everything he had in the way of *Allāh*. He even sacrificed

1. The Ziarat of the Prophet (s), Mafatih al-Jinan
2. *Ziarat Amin Allah*, *Mafatih al-Jinan*

his children and companions so that religion could survive. Do we not have to show respect for someone who has sacrificed all he had for Islam and the Qur'an?

Showing respect to *Imam Ḥusayn* (a) is in fact showing respect to *Allāh*. How is this polytheism? How is this worship of other than *Allāh*? Yes, a group called the "deifiers of Ali" do exist, whose case is completely separate. If they truly believe Imam Ali (a) to be god, then they are polytheists.

We perceive worship as exclusively belonging to *Allāh*. And who says that this reverence of the great people of religion is not permitted and is polytheism?

Permission of pilgrimage to the Mausoleum of the Messenger of Allāh(s)

Shia scholars and pilgrimage to the Mausoleum of the Messenger of Allāh (s)

The recommendatory nature of the pilgrimage to the holy grave of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) and the Imams (a) and other pious ones has been accepted by the Shia scholars and is definite. There is no body opposing this. This is so well known that there is no need to quote the sayings of the scholars and give any reasons. However, to increase the knowledge and information of our respected reader we shall mention a few:

1– The late Sheikh Tusi said:

"When people abandon Hajj, the pilgrimage of the house of Allāh, it is necessary for the Imam to force and compel them to this act. Also, if they abandon the pilgrimage to the grave of the Messenger of Allāh, the Imam must force and compel them to the pilgrimage of the Prophet(s)."[1]

2– The great jurist, the late Ibn Hamza Tusi says:

"If someone decides to go for Hajj and pilgrimage to the house of Allāh, it is better if he travels through Iraq. He can go for pilgrimage to the Prophet of Allāh (a) and if he delays the pilgrimage of the Prophet (s) and performs Hajj first, he must return to Madina again and make the pilgrimage to the Prophet (s)."[2]

3– The late Muhaqiq Helli has said:

If people abandon the pilgrimage of the Messenger of Allāh (s), they must be forced to this act because abandoning the pilgrimage of the

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1. *al-Mabsoot/ Sheikh Tousi*/ 515-516.
2. *Alwasilah/ Ibn Hamza Tousi*/196.

Messenger of Allāh (s) is unfaithfulness, and disloyalty, and unfaithfulness to the Messenger of Allāh (s) is forbidden."[1]

4– The late Ayatollah Golpaygani said the following regarding the virtues of the pilgrimage to the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*:

"Dear Pilgrim! With no doubt you know that in order to complete Hajj (the pilgrimage of the house of Allāh), it is specifically recommended to make the pilgrimage of the grave of the magnanimous Prophet in Madina city and go to that holy place to seek blessings and kiss the doorway. This act is especially recommended for the pilgrims, and abandoning the pilgrimage of the Prophet (s) is unfaithfulness and disloyalty to that worthy man."[2]

The pilgrimage to the Tomb of the holy Prophet (s) has great importance for Shia scholars to the extent that some of the contemporary scholars have said that it is among the necessities of religion. They have said it is recommended that the pilgrim of the house of *Allāh* goes to Madina. There is a consensus amongst the Muslims that the pilgrimage of the holy Prophet (s) is considered highly recommended. For this reason we shall limit ourselves to the above quotes from Shia scholars and discuss answers given to the paradoxes of Wahhabism.

Ibn Taymiyyah on the pilgrimage to the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*

Ibn Taymiyyah is of the belief that visiting the grave of the holy Prophet (s) is not permissible and has created suspicion and hesitation even among the people of Madina. He has written a book *Majmouatul Rasael al-Kobra*. This book contains a collection of narrations (*hadith*). In this book he says:

"All traditions concerning the pilgrimage to the grave of the holy Prophet (s) are weak and fake. Futhermore, none of the traditionists or legislators, such as the *Musnad* of Ahmad has made any mention of it. However the tradition quoted by Abu Da'ud from the Prophet (s) says: There is no man who sends

1. *Sharayi' al-Islam/ Muhaqqiq Helli*: 1: 252.
2. *Manasek Hajj*: *Ayatollah Golpaygani*: 186.

salutations (*salutations (salam)*) upon me except that my soul is returned to my body so that I may reply to him. Whoever sends greetings to the Prophet (s) whilst standing before his grave, the Prophet (s) replies to his salutations. Whoever sends salutations upon the Prophet (s) from a distance, the Prophet (s) replies to him. Just as it says in Sunan Nesaee, the Prophet (s) said: *Allāh* has nominated angels over my grave who deliver the greetings of my nation to me."

Again, in Sunan Nesaee it says:

"Send upon me plenty of salutations (*salawat*) on the day and night of Friday. Truly your blessings are delivered to me."

Yet, in the words of Ibn Taymiyyah, the pilgrimage to the Prophet (s) has no proper backing and traditions related to this matter are weak and forged

At the end, he quotes only two narrations that say whoever greets the Prophet (s) from afar or near, the Prophet (s) will reply to him.

Ibn Taymiyyah has claimed that it is impermissible to make a pilgrimage to the Prophet (s) even for those living in Madina, however, Mohammad ibn *'Abd al-Wahhāb* is not of the same opinion and has said that it is a tradition and also recommended for people of Madina to go to the pilgrimage of the grave of the Prophet (s).

We will prove the permissibility of the pilgrimage of the Prophet(s) under five headings.

First: The majority of Sunni scholars believe that there is a consensus on the permissibility and recommendation of the pilgrimage to the Messenger of Allāh (s).

1– *Samhudi* quotes from *Taqi Adin Subki* in the book *Wefa al-Wefa* explaining this consensus:

"This is an issue upon which there is a consensus both verbal and by action".

He has recounted the sayings of the Sunni Imams in detail, and said that the pilgrimage is performed to "win God's favour," which results in proximity to *Allāh*, based on the Book (the *Qur'an*), traditions, consensus and analogical deductions.

The following reasons are given in the book:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمْ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا﴾

"…And had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allāh for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allāh All-clement, All-merciful."[1]

This verse encourages visiting the Messenger of God (s) and imploring for forgiveness through him. The imploring for forgiveness through the Messenger of *Allāh (s)* is not a matter that came to an end with his demise. The Prophet (s) will ask for forgiveness for the faithful and his nation after his demise as well, for he is considered alive. After his demise and when the deeds are presented to him, he will ask for forgiveness for the nation. It is assessed from the level of his kindness that he will not abandon asking for forgiveness for the one who comes to him repenting.

The scholars commonly use this verse for both before and after his demise. They consider reciting this verse as recommended for the one who comes to his grave.

Samhudi then quotes the story of an Arab who came to the grave and recited some poems and recited this verse. He also quoted a similar story about Imam Ali (a). The purpose of recounting this famous story is the continuous benefits of this verse even after the Prophet's (s) demise. This proves the recommendation of visiting the grave of the Prophet (s).

In the narrations of Sahih (which they agree to be correct), the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s), their master, and the graves (of the pious ones) has been recommended. These narrations also refer to the general matter we referred to earlier.

1. *Al-Nesae*, Chapter 4, verse 64.

The consensus:

Ayaz has said: "the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) is a tradition among Muslims and there is a consensus on it. It is a virtue which has been encouraged."

2– In *Wefa al-Wefa*, the Hanafite scholars and jurists have said:

"The pilgrimage to the Prophet (s) is one of the most excellent recommendatory acts. It is rather at the level of obligation. The Malakites and the Hanbalites have also stated this clearly. Subki has also explained their sayings in the book he has about pilgrimage. Regardless, since there is a consensus on this, there is no longer any need for analysis and research.

3– In Musnad, in the footnotes of the tradition about the pilgrimage to the Prophet (s), Abu Hanifa quotes from Fadhel Lahnawi in Sharh Mutta:

"Certainly, the scholars agree that the pilgrimage to the Prophet (s) is permissible and among the greatest of recommendatory deeds, the pre-eminent of all lawful acts. Thus anyone who argues its lawfulness, has truly been misled in his research and is himself a misleading person."

4– In the annotation of *Rad al-Mukhtar*, *Ibn Abedin* wrote:

"It is said that (the pilgrimage to the Prophet(s) grave) is recommended. That is to say (as mentioned in the book *Sharh al-Bab*), there is a consensus amongst the Muslims regarding the recommendatory nature of the act. The other saying is what is attributed to Hafiz ibn Taymiyyah in which he has prohibited this pilgrimage. Some scholars have said that this attribution has no base and origin. Hafiz has prohibited going on a trip to mosques except for three: *Masjid al-Haram, Masjid al-Aqsa, Masjid al-Nabi.* However, he has no objection to the essence of the pilgrimage, such as the pilgrimage to the graves, but because of certain descriptions he has given, the majority of scholars have rejected his saying. Imam Subki has a serious peice of writing in this regard. In Sharh al-Bab he says: "Is the pilgrimage of the Prophet's (s) grave recommended for women? The correct answer is certainly the affirmative, but under conditions that some scholars have clearly stated. However, the more

correct saying in our school of thought (that is the saying of Karakhi and those other than him), is that the permissibility of a pilgrimage to graves is proven without question. But according to a less correct statement in our school of thought (again because of the general statements of the companions) this is recommended, and *Allāh* is the most aware of the truth and just sayings."

Further in the Musnaf, he says: "Some have said that it (the Prophet's (s) pilgrimage) is obligatory," adding in *Sharh al-Bab*: "just as I mentioned this in *Al-Dorah al-Madhiyah fi Ziyarat al-Mustafawiya*." And this statement (the obligation of it) is mentioned by *Kheir Ramli* from *Ibn Hajar* in the annotations of the book *Al-Menh*. He said that *Ibn Hajar* agreed with him. Yes, the statements in *Albab wa Alfath* and *Sharh al-Mukhtar* say that the pilgrimage, for those who have the financial ability, is closer to being obligatory. The details about the virtues, qualities and disciplines of pilgrimage are mentioned in *Sharh al-Mukhtar Walbbab* for those who wish to refer to them."

5– In *Alfiqh Ala Madhaheb al-Arba'ah*, the agreement of the scholars of the four schools of thought are mentioned. It is said in this book:

"The pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave is highly recommended and there are traditions regarding this. Therefore, the permission for the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) tomb is among those matters on which there is a consensus amongst the Sunni scholars. How is it possible for Ibn Taymiyyah to regard such an issue as an innovation in religion when there is a consensus and agreement on it?"

Second: The actions of the companions and followers

There are numerous narrations in the books of Sunni scholars dealing with the way of life and routine of the companions and followers,regarding the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave:

1– *Malik ibn Anas* while recounting a narration from *Abdullah Ibn Dinar* says: *'Umar*'s son stood by the grave of the Prophet (s) and sent blessings on him and prayed for *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar*.

2– *Bayhaqi* quotes from *Abdullah ibn Dinar*: I saw Abdullah ibn *'Umar* standing by the grave of the Prophet (s) and sending blessings

on the Prophet (s) and praying. He then prayed for *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar*.

3– It is quoted from *Ibn Ouwn* in *Wefa al-Wefa*: "A man asked *Nafe'*: 'Was the son of *'Umar* sending blessings on the grave of the Prophet (s)?' He replied: 'Yes, I truly saw him coming one hundred times or even more to the grave and saying: Peace be upon the Prophet (s), Peace on *Abū Bakr* and Peace be on my father.'"

Muhye Adin Nawawi has narrated something similar.

4– It is written in the book *Wefa' al-Wefa'*: "Among the people who travelled from Damascus to Madina for the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave was *Bilal ibn Riyah*, the caller of prayer (*Mu'adh'dhin)* just as *Ibn 'Asakir* has narrated this from *Abu-Dara* with firm evidence."

He then recounted the reason for Bilal staying in Damascus and says: "Bilal saw the Messenger of God (s) in his dream asking him: What oppression is this that you are undergoing? Is it not time you visited my grave? Bilal woke up in a sad and depressed state and was frightened. He then mounted his horse and set off for Madina, and went to the grave of the Prophet (s). While he placed his face on the grave with tears flowing from his cheeks, *Ḥasan* and *Ḥusayn* (a) suddenly entered. *Bilal* embraced and kissed them. They then told him: 'We wish to hear your Adhan (the call for prayer).' He then recited the Adhan."

He also quotes from Subki in this very book: "Our reliance on referring to this story is not only the dream Bilal saw but rather his acts and deeds, such as his leaving for Madina to visit the grave of the Prophet (s), especially during the Caliphate of *'Umar*, in which the companions of the Prophet (s) were plenty and the journey of someone like Bilal was not hidden from them. If the journey was discouraged and prohibited, the companions of the Prophet (s) in Madina would have forbidden it and criticized him. After the above passage, the incident of Bilal's Adhan in Madina, which apparently was the first Adhan by Bilal after the death of the Prophet(s), is quoted.

5– After *'Umar* made peace with the people of Jerusalem during the conquest of Damascus, Kab al-Ahbar came to him and converted to

Islam. *'Umar* was pleased with his conversion to Islam and told him: "Would you like to come to Madina and visit the grave of the Prophet(s) and benefit from his pilgrimage?" He said: 'Yes! Oh, Master of the faithful (***Amir al-Mo'menin***). I shall do so.' When *'Umar* entered Madina, he was the first person who came to the mosque to send blessings on the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*.

6– The Late Allamah Amini says:

"There is a commonly quoted narration from *'Umar* Ibn Abd al-Aziz that he always sent a messenger to the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) to recite *Salutations (salam)* (blessings) for the Prophet (s) and come back. In another saying it is said that he constantly sent a messenger from Damascus to Madina to the Prophet's (s) grave. This is quoted by Bayhaqi in the book *Sha'ab al-Iman*, by *Abū Bakr* Ahmad-ibn-Amro- Nilli (deceased in year 287 A.H) in his *Manasek* (rituals), by Qadi 'Iyad in the book *Ashifa*, by Hafiz ibn Jouzi in the book *Mothayer al-Qeram Asakin*, and by Taqi Adin Subki in *Sheqa' Aseqam*, as well as others.

It is apparent from the statement mentioned here that this act was carried out continuously, because he says:

«و كان عمرابن عبد العزيز يبعث»

The word "Kana" implies continuity, repetition and preference.

Therefore, the doubt of Ibn Taymiyyah regarding the permissibility of pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave and considering it an innovation is baseless. His view of bowing before other than *Allāh* being forbidden and a form of polytheism is unjustified for it is not possible for an act to be forbidden and regarded as an innovation whilst sincerely being carried out by the followers and companions of the Prophet (s).

Third: Views of the Sunni scholars regarding the pilgrimage of the Prophet (s)

The permissibility of the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave is so evident in Sunni books that it does not leave any place for doubt.We shall point to some of their views below:

1– The great Sunni scholar, Taqi Adin Abul Hasan Abd al-Kafi al-Subki, has quoted many narrations from the Prophet (s) in *Shifa Aseqam fi Ziyarat Khayr Anam*, which he considers authenitic and valid.

The following is his conclusion concerning the narrations:

"On the basis of what we said and even less than that, the aspersion cast by the one who says the traditions about the pilgrimage are fake and forges, is clarified. Glory be to *Allāh* the exalted, do they not feel ashamed before *Allah* (swt) and His Messenger (s) for this? They say things no scholar, ignorant, traditionist or anyone else for that matter has said. How could a Muslim allow himself to call all the traditions (among which is the tradition of the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave) fake and made up?"

2– He has mentioned the consensus of the scholars of the four schools of thought in a book *Al-Fiqh Ala al-Madhaheb al-Arba'a* (which is a book of jurisprudence). In this book he says:

"The pilgrimage to the Propjet's (s) grave has the most eminent recommendation, and there are some narrations in this regard."

3– Imam Ghazali, while discussing the journey in his book called *Ehya al-Uloum* says:

"One kind of journey is the one which is carried out by man for the purpose of worship, such as holy struggle (*Jihad*), the ritual pilgrimage (*Hajj*), the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s), the grave of the companions, the followers and the saints. This pilgrimage is, in itself, worship. The pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s), his companions, followers and saints is in no contradiction with the narration:

«لا تشد الرحال الاالی ثلاثه مساجد»

Because this narration says: 'Journeys to mosques other than these three mosques is not permitted,' whereas, the issue of pilgrimage is different and in no conflict with it."

4– The late Allamah Amini names more than forty well known scholars from the four religious schools, quoting their views regarding the recommendation of the pilgrimage and the journey for it.

5– Samhudi (deceased 911 A.H), quotes numerous narrations about the recommendations of the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave. He says:

"The other reasons for pilgrimage are in the second chapter even though the term pilgrimage is not mentioned. The lawfulness of the pilgrimage has been emphasized to the extent that some have deemed it obligatory. This chapter has also mentioned the fact that the Prophet (s) has life after death; the journey for the pilgrimage in itself being correct; the permissibility of vows for it; and, the permissibility of hiring someone to perform the pilgrimage on one's behalf."

6– It is quoted in the *Musnad* of *Abu-Hanifah* from *Ibn 'Umar*:

"It is among the traditions to come to the grave of the Prophet (s) from the direction of *Qiblah*, while placing *Qiblah* behind oneself whilst facing the grave and say: "Peace be upon you O Prophet, and may the blessings of Allah be upon you."

In Wafa' al-wafa' he says:

"This is quoted by Hafiz Talha in his *Musnad* from Uthman Ibn Sa'id, who quoted from Abi Abd al-Rahman al-Moqri, who quoted from Abi Hanifah, who quoted from Nafe', who quoted from *Ibn 'Umar*, and says that the intended meaning of the tradition is the Pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave."

7– It is quoted from Abi Arabi:

"Truly, the traditions and narrations about the pilgrimage to the graves of the Prophets (a), companions, followers, scholars and the rest, for the sake of blessings, are famous ones."

8– Abi Emran Maliki has said:

"The pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave is obligatory and Abd al-Haq Seqli has interpreted this *obligation as the obligatory tradition."*

9– Muhyee Adin Nawawi wrote:

"Sheikh Abu Ali Sanji has said: 'It suffices the pilgrim to go for pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) in Madina mosque.' The *Imam al-Haramein* (the leader of the two mosques) has also quoted this from Abu Ali Sanji."

10– The author of *Wefà' al-Wefà'* quotes from the Hanafite jurists and scholars:

"The pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) is among the most eminent recommendations and because there is consensus on it, there is no need for analysis and research.

11– Milbari Hendi writes:

"Benefits of the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave are many, and many are the traditions regarding its virtue, and it is a confirmed tradition even if the pilgrim is not on the pilgrimage of Hajj or Umratu Tamatu'."

12– Muhyee Adin Nawavi wrote:

"Because of the narration from Ibn 'Abbas the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) is recommended. He has quoted the Prophet (s) as saying: 'Whoever visits my grave, my intercession shall become obligatory for him.' It is recommended that the pilgrim pray in the mosque of the Prophet (s), because of his saying that: 'A prayer in my mosque is equivalent to one thousand prayers in other mosques.'"

Now let us quote the tradition of *Ibn 'Umar* from Bara'a, Dar Qutni and Bayhaqi, using two weak proofs. Among the traditions about the pilgrimage to the grave and the mosque of the Prophet (s) and sending blessings on his companions *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar* (May God be pleased with them) is the a tradition from Abu Hurayrah, quoting the Prophet (s) as saying: 'Do not set for the journey to mosques other than for three mosques: *Masjid al-Haram, Masjid al-Aqsa* and my mosque.' This narration is also quoted by Bukhari and Muslim.

It is also quoted from Abu Hurayrah: 'The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said to me: 'Nobody sends greetings (*Salutations- salam*) to me unless *Allāh* returns my soul to my body to reply to his greetings (*Salutation- salam*).' This narration is quoted by Abu Da'ud with various records from *Sahih*. He quotes from Abu Hurayrah that he said: "The messenger of *Allāh* said to me: 'Between my grave and my pulpit is a garden from the gardens of heaven, and my pulpit is

located on my pool.'"[1] This narration is quoted by Bukhari and Muslim as well as Abdullah Ibn Zeid Ansari.

Yazid ibn Abi Abid quotes that he said: 'Salmah ibn Akwa' considered praying before this pillar a good deed. He said: The Prophet (s) considered praying before this pillar a good and worthwhile deed.' This narration is also quoted by Bukhari and Muslim.

It is quoted from Nafe': "Whenever *Ibn 'Umar* returned from a journey he would enter the mosque of the Prophet (s) and go near the grave and say: 'Peace be upon you Oh Messenger of *Allāh*! Peace be upon you Oh *Abū Bakr*! And peace be upon you Oh my father!' This narration is quoted by Bayhaqi and *Allāh* is the most knowledgeable."

13– Bakri Dumyati wrote:

"Benefits from the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave are many, for it is a confirmed custom. When the words of the author about rituals including the pillar, the obligations and the recommendations come to an end, he states that the pilgrimage to our master, the Messenger of *Allāh (s)* is a debt upon us to show our gratitude. It is better that he treats this pilgrimage like the other recommended deeds of inviolable things during the state of sanctity (Ihram)."

14– Mohammad ibn Sharbini wrote:

"And the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) is a custom and recommended. This is because of his (s) saying that: 'Whoever performs pilgrimage to my grave, my intercession shall become obligatory for him.' Ibn Khozaymah quoted this narration as one of the Sahih traditions from *Ibn 'Umar*. The meaning of this is that the intercession of the Prophet (s) for those other than his pilgrims is permissible. There are furthermore other narrations from the Prophet (s) that say: 'whoever comes to my pilgrimage, his needs will not be answered by other than my pilgrimage and *Allāh* has put me as his intercessor on the Day of Judgment.' Ibn Sakan has quoted this narration in his law book (Sunan) as being among the *Sahih* traditions.

1. I.e. the pool of abundance (*kawthar*)

It is narrated by Bukhari that the Prophet (s) said: 'Whoever sends blessings on me while standing beside my grave, *Allāh* has appointed an angel to deliver his blessings to me and *Allāh* will answer his needs in this world and the next. On the Day of Judgment I will be his intercessor or his witness.' Thus the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) is amongst the best means of attaining nearness to *Allāh* even if the pilgrim is not on the Hajj pilgrimage or Umratu Tamatu'. The intention of the author is to emphasise the importance of the pilgrimage for two reasons:

One is that the majority of the pilgrims travel great distances and thus, when they are near Madina it will be obscene if they abandon the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) grave. The second is that it is mentioned in a Prophetic tradition that: 'Whoever performs Hajj but does not come to my pilgrimage has truly disregarded me.' This narration is quoted by Ibn Uday in the book, *Alkamel*, as well as others. This implies that there is an emphasis on Hajj pilgrims to visit the grave of the Prophet (s) and the ruling for the *Umratu tamatu'* pilgrim is the same though it has not been mentioned by the author."

15– Bahooti wrote:

"And the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s) is recommended for both men and women because of the majority of the narrations that Dar Qutni has quoted from *Ibn 'Umar* that says that the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: "After my death, whoever performs Hajj and comes for pilgrimage to my grave is as if he has visited me when I was alive." In another narration he said: Whoever comes for pilgrimage to my grave, my intercession will become obligatory for him."

Fourth: The characteristics of the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) Mausoleum

In books by Sunni scholars, the characteristics, manners and effects of the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (s) Mausoleum, and its permissibility have been discussed separately.

The Wahhabis criticise Muslims, and especially Shias, for the manner in which they enter the shrine of the Messenger of *Allāh (s),* pray in certain locations, touch the enclosure of the grave and seek blessings

from the grave or touch the pillars of the mosque or the pulpits or read special supplications.

It is quoted from San'ani that he said: "Circumambulationg of the graves, touching them with hands or other parts of the body, or seeking blessings are signs of polytheism and such acts are similar to those practised during the era of Ignorance for idols and icons."

In a letter to Sheikh Arakb al-Maghrebi, Wahhabis wrote: "Reverence shown to the grave of the Prophet (s) and saints is counted as polytheism and idol worship."

In response to this we say:

Firstly, veneration of the grave of the Prophet (s) and the saints is among the examples of honouring divine sacraments and a part of the Hajj rituals.

﴿ذَٰلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى ٱلْقُلُوبِ﴾

"And whoever venerates the sacraments of Allāh indeed that arises from the God-wariness of hearts."[1]

And there are no reasons to boycott it. What should be avoided is, as done in some extreme cases, prostrating before the graves, supplicating them not Allah (swt), or any form of veneration with the intention of worship.

Secondly, not all forms of veneration are worship and polytheism. They are not forbidden and are rather worship of God. Therefore, paying respect and veneration to the one who *Allāh* has dignified, such as the Prophets (a), the saints, scholars and the pious people is not worship, but we are also paying our respects because *Allāh* has respected him, therefore, it is a kind of veneration and glorification of *Allāh.*

The other is the veneration of the *Ka'bah,* the house of *Allāh*, Masjid al-Haram, the corner stone, the station of *Ibrāhīm*, *Hajar al-Aswad*, Safa and Marwa, Mina and Masha'ar, Arafat all creditable because of their connection with *Allāh.* If veneration of the graves of the

1. *Al-Hajj*, Chapter 22, verse 32.

Prophet (s) and saints is polytheism, then veneration of these places or these people will also be polytheism.

Since their veneration was a highly regarded act during their life and not considered polytheism (as mentioned in numerous narrations and Qur'anic verses such as those of Chapter Hujarat), their death will not bring this virtue to naught, nor remove their sanctity.

In a debate the Malakite Imam had with Mansur Dawaniqi at the Shrine of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*, he said:

"Truly the respect toward the Prophet (s) after his demise is like the respect during his lifetime."

About "imploring for assistance", and intermediatory life[1] of the Prophet (s), the Wahhabis say:

"We believe that the Prophet (s) possesses an intermediatory life higher than that of martyrs, in grave. This has been clearly stated in the Qur'an because the Prophet (s) is greater than the martyrs."

For a more detailed discussion refer to the chapter on seeking blessings in the present book.

Respecting the Prophet (s) being obligatory upon Muslims, it is understood that his place of burial is also worthy of respect and reverence. From this, the affection that the pilgrams show through acts such as kissing the shrine is definitely not worship of the grave or the stones it is made of. Such places gain a type of blessing and honour as they are the burial place of the Prophets (a) and the saints. It is their presence that makes them worthy of respect and reverence similar to how the cover of the holy Qur'an is respect worthy because of its proximity to the Qur'an and must not be made impure, as it would be a sacrilegious act, no matter what material it is made of. The station of *Ibrāhīm* (a) (the place where he used to stand during building the *Ka'bah*), must also be respected. In certain sects, such as Shiasm, the prayer for obligatory circumambulation must be performed behind and very close to this station. The Qur'an orders:

1. Translators note: This is a reference to Barzakh, which is the transitory life between the material life of this world and that of the here-after.

﴿وَٱتَّخِذُواْ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى﴾

"…And take the venue of prayer from Abraham's Station..." [1]
It has not even struck the mind of any Muslim that the reverence of the station of *Ibrāhīm*, *Hajar al-Aswad* or circumambulation around Ka'bah and other acts as such are worship of the actual stones and buildings, rather it is considered a kind of esteem for them.

If such was worship and a cause of polytheism, *Allāh* would have never ordered it and they would not have been among the Muslim duties as *Allāh* never commands polytheism. On the contrary, he never forgives a polytheist unless he believes.

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"Indeed Allāh does not forgive that any partner should be ascribed to Him, but He forgives anything besides that to whomever He wishes….."[2]

Would *Allāh* objectively command polytheism when it has been fought against by all great Prophets (a) (as well as condemned in the Qur'an?

Thirdly: All affairs performed with the intention of gaining blessings, including circumambulation, touching the pulpit and grave and walls that have been mentioned in history and Shia and Sunni narrations say that in the beginning of Islam Muslim used to seek blessing from the water that the Prophet (s) used to wash his hands in or any hair of the Prophet (s) that fell, or his saliva. For the sake of examples, we shall point out some of these cases:

1– It is said in *Sirah Halibah*:

"In the year of Hudaybiah, Orwa ibn Masoud Thaqati was once standing next to the Prophet (s). He suddenly saw the companions competing to seek blessings from the water the Prophet (s) made Wudu (Ablution) with. They were about to kill one another for the

1. *Al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 125.
2. *Surah al-Nisa*, Chapter 4, verse 48.

sake of accessing it. They would do the same for the Saliva of the Prophet (s) and any hair of the Prophet (s) that fell."

2– Bukhari quotes in the chapter on *Sefatu Nabbi* (the characteristics of the Prophet), using evidence from Abu Juhayfah:

"When the Prophet (s) left his house for the journey to Batha desert (Mecca desert) he made Wudu (ablution) and performed two Rakahs of Zohr (noon) and Asar (afternoon) prayer each…"

Up to where he says: "Then people came and took his hands and rubbed them on their faces." The narrator says: "I also took the hands of the Prophet (s) and rubbed them on my face. His hands were cooler than snow and more redolent than any perfume." At the end of this very chapter, Bukhari quotes from the same narrator using the same evidence: "Bilal would bring the remaining water from the ablution of the Prophet (s) and people would seek blessing from that water."

In the chapter *Virtues of Ablution* he quotes Abu Juhayfah: "We were on a journey with the Prophet (s). He would make Wudu and people took the remaining water and wiped it on the faces." The like of this narration is also in the book *As-Salat* which says: "People would rub the remaining water from the ablution of the Prophet (s) on their faces."

Qastalani has said: "The permission to seek blessings from anything that has felt the body of the pious ones is deduced from this sentence."

3– In As Salat, Muslim quotes from Abu Juhayfah:

"I met the Prophet (s) in the desert of Mecca. Bilal used to bring his ablution water and people would hasten to reach it. Some would acquire it and some would sprinkle it on others." Nawawi says: "This means that when they got the ablution water, some would deliver the wetness of that water to others and sprinkle some drops on themselves." Using the same evidence from this very narrator, in another narration he says: "I saw Bilal bringing the ablution water of the Prophet (s) and the companions hastening to it. Any water anyone got he would wipe it on his face and if some were not able to get any, they would use the moisture of the hands of their friends and rub it on their face."

Nawawi says: "Seeking blessings from the traces of the pious ones and using the remnants of the ablution water, food, drink and cloth is also mentioned in this chapter."

4– There are numerous narrations regarding the attaining of blessings from the pulpit of the Prophet (s) through physical contact and which, God willing, will be discussed later.

5– There is a famous incident that took place during the conquest of Mecca. During that time, the companions gathered around the Prophet (s) whilst he was performing *wudhu*, trying to gather the water falling off from his abolution for blessings. as Abu Sufyan watched in astonishment. If seeking blessings from the ablution water and the water that has been poured on the hands of the Prophet (s) is permissible, then doing so from his grave would inevitably become permissible as well. For, just like the water, the grave is also what has come into contact with his blessed body. The grave is encasing his body, and quoting the saying of Wahhabis: "The Prophet (s) in his grave is in such a way that he can feel." All these are examples of seeking blessings from the body of the Prophet (s) and not worshipping him, the stones or the bricks.

Now we shall discuss each of the cases mentioned above from the viewpoint of a Sunni scholar.

The recommendation of entering the holy *Riyad al-Jannah* from the gate of Gabriel (*Bab e Jibrail*) and the salutation prayers next to the pulpit is discussed first

It is desireable to enter the *Riyad al-Jannah* through the gate of Gabriel. That is to say, because of what we mentioned about other entrances, the pilgrims have made it a habit of entering through the Gate of Peace, *Bab us salam*.

When the pilgrim wants to enter the holy *Riyad al-Jannah* of the Prophet (s) he must free his heart (of worldly matters) and purify his inner soul and step in with his right foot and say:

"I seek refuge in Allāh and His forgiveness."[1]

1. *al-Mabsoot/ Sheikh Tousi/* 515-516.

He (the author) then says:

"When you enter the mosque or leave it, never abandon this prayer which includes praising and lauding Allāh and sending peace and blessings on the Prophet (s) and his family and his companions and the pious servants of Allāh, and asking Allāh to forgive your sins and give you the opportunity to correct yourself and contribute in deeds that are pleasing to Allāh.."[1]

Samhoodi says: If you enter through the gate of Gabriel, pass behind the noble chamber gracefully, in peace. Then perform the two Rakah prayer of greetings (of the mosque) in the Prophet's (s) prayer niche (*Mihrab*) or behind the pulpit. He then explains the value of this prayer, and the supplication and praise after the prayer, and questions whether the greeting prayer has priority over sending blessings (*salutations (salam)*) and the Ziarat (pilgrimage), or sending blessings on the Prophet (s) and the pilgrimage, over the prayer, or does he have a choice to submit or defer it? He also quotes some sayings from Malik regarding the standing place in the shrine of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*:

Standing at the tomb of the Prophet

1– Zakaria Ansari says:

It is said: 'When the pilgrim enters the Mosque (of the Prophet -s-) he must stand in the *Riyad al-Jannah* between the grave of the holy Prophet (s) and his pulpit. He must then offer the mosque greeting prayer next to the pulpit. After praying, he must thank *Allāh* for this blessing. Then, while facing the head of the noble grave with the *Qiblah* behind him and looking down with a heart free of worldly concerns, step away from the grave as much as four cubits while sending blessings upon him without raising his voice. The least of the blessings he must send is, "Peace be upon you, Oh Messenger of *Allāh*."

2– Mūsā al-Hijawi presents the same as above.

3– In *Hawashi Sherwani wal Ebadi* it is also the same.

4– Bakri Damiyati wrote:

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1. *al-Mabsoot/ Sheikh Tousi/* 515-516.

"Then if he wants to enter through the gate of Gabriel, he must enter the *Riyad al-Jannah*, with awe and dignity, from behind the Monifah chamber and perform two *Rakahs* of prayer in the place of prayer of the Prophet (s). He must read *Surah Kaferoon* and *Surah Ikhlas* and utter the intention of the mosque-greeting prayers. It is also a custom that he stands, sends blessings and then, performs the pilgrimage. He must thank *Allāh* for this blessing and generosity and seek acceptance for his pilgrimage from the Prophet (s). He must also read the supplications of the Prophet (s). In a polite manner, he then must come near the grave from the head while he has his eyes down and is looking at the floor and before the greatness of the Prophet (s); who is alive in his grave by the will of *Allāh* and is aware of the appearance and secrets of the creatures. He must then say:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Prophet (s), and may all the blessings and bestowals of Allāh be upon you."

5– Abd Arahman ibn Qodamah wrote:

It is recommended that whoever enters the mosque, should do so with his right foot and say:

"In the name of Allāh, with greetings upon the Messenger of Allāh. Oh Allāh! Forgive me and open the doors of your blessings on me."

And he should leave the mosque with his left foot and recite that which he did upon entrance. However, instead of the second sentence he must say:

"Oh Allāh, open the doors of your generosity and virtue on me."

This change is because of the narration from *Fatimah* (the daughter of the Prophet -s-) which was taught to her by the Prophet (s). The narration says: Whenever you enter the (nabawi) mosque and come to the grave, face the middle of the grave and with the *Qiblah* behind you say:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Messenger of Allah and may the blessings and bestowals of Allāh be upon you."

6– Samhudi says:

'It is quoted that the pilgrim should stand four cubits away from the head of the Prophet's (s) grave.'

Ibn Abd Asalam has said:

'He must stand at a distance of three cubits.' This distance is undoubtedly measured from inside of the shrine.

Ibn Habib has said in the book called *Al-Wazeha* that one should stand facing the Qiblah and utter the intention of making a pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s), then ask for permission to enter from the Prophet (s).

In the book called *Ihya al-Ulum*, after mentioning the place where the pilgrim must halt, Qazaei says: 'It is highly desirable to visit the Prophet (s) just as one would have when he was alive and not get any closer to him than one would when he was alive.'

In *Wefa al-Wefa* he says:

'Then the pilgrim should send his greetings neither loudly, nor quietly saying:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Messenger of Allāh! Peace be upon you, Oh Prophet of Allāh."

And whoever is unable to memorise this or is short of time, he can utter some of it, and as Nawawi has said, the minimum of this is:

"Peace and blessings of Allāh be upon you."

He has quoted another detailed visitational greeting (*Ziyarat*) from Ibn Habib who has recounted it from Ayaz. He says: 'Al-Motri and Al-Majd have reported a visitational greeting (*Ziyarat*) with numerous descriptions.'

He then quotes from Nawawi: 'The pilgrim should then return to his first location in front of the grave and beseech the Prophet (s) and ask for his intercession before *Allāh*. Once he has completed this, he should move towards his holy head and stand between the grave and the pillar present there and face *Qiblah*. It is in this place that he should busy himself with the praise and worship of *Allāh*, praying for himself, his friends, his parents and others.'

7– Bohouti wrote:

It is customary that once the pilgrim enters the mosque of Madina, he should say what which is said in other mosques, step into the rows of

those praying and then perform the mosque-salutation prayer. He must then stand in front of the noble grave with his back to the Qiblah and face the wall of the chamber (the shrine), and send blessings upon the Prophet (s) and say:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Messenger of Allāh."

8– Sheikh Sayyid Sābiq wrote:

It is customary for the pilgrim to enter the *Riyad al-Jannah* first and perform the mosque-salutation prayer with the necessary disciplines. Once he finishes the prayer, he should face the holy grave with full attention with his back to the Qiblah and say:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Messenger of Allāh!"

9– Following the visitational greeting of the Prophet (s) (*Ziyaratu-Nabbi*) tradition, Mulla Ali Qari wrote:

Using his evidences from Nafe, he quoted from *ibn- 'Umar*: Among the customs of the companions and their followers is entering the Nabawi mosque from the direction of the *Qiblah* (i.e. with ones back to the *Qiblah),* facing the holy grave (there is an emphasis on facing the grave) while saying:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Prophet, and may the blessings and the mercy of Allāh be upon you."

10– In the chapter *The Mosque of the Prophet (s)*, Muhayyudin Nawawi wrote:

Just like other mosques, one should enter the Prophet's (s) mosque with the right foot and leave with the left foot. Once he enters the mosque, he should stand in the *Riyad al-Jannah*, between the grave and the pulpit, and perform the mosque's salutation prayers next to the grave.

In "Ehya Olum Adin":

It is recommended that the pilgrim stand with the pulpit pillars next to his right shoulders facing the cylindrical pillar at the beginning of the mosque. This location was the Prophet's (s) location from where the mosque has expanded.

In Al- Madina:

The distance between the grave and the pulpit is fifty three cubits and a span. After performing the salutational prayers in the Mausoleum or other locations in the mosque, he should thank *Allāh* for this blessing and ask for the acceptances of his pilgrimage as well as anything else he wants from *Allāh*. Then, while facing the grave with the Qiblah behind him, with humility and awe, keeping the grand station of the Prophet (s) in mind and a heart free of worldly affairs, he should send his greetings and blessings with a voice neither loud nor quiet, saying:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Prophet of Allāh."

Then he should go back to his place in the same manner and beseech the Prophet (s) for assistance and ask him to intercede in the presence of *Allāh*.

The author further goes on to quote the incident of an Arab man from Marudi who came to the Prophet's (s) grave, greeting him and sending blessings upon him.

Then he says:

The pilgrim should then walk towards the head of the Prophet's (s) grave and stand between the cylinders, facing the *Qiblah* and praise *Allāh* praying for himself, his parents, his relatives, great personalities and his religious brothers and other Muslims. Then he should return to the Mausoleum and offer some prayers and recite various supplications standing next to the pulpit.

The words of Nawawi imply the permission, rather recommendation of beseeching the Prophet (s) for assistance.

11– In response to Ibn Taymiyyah, we have quoted more than ten sayings and rulings of the scholars of various sects including: Malakites, Shafi'ites, Hanbalites and Hanafites regarding facing the grave of the Prophet (s) with ones back to the *Qiblah*.

12– In some well-known narrations, the recommendation of facing the Qiblah has also been mentioned in Sunni books among which is the narration in Musnad by Abu- Hanifah quoted from Nafe' who has narrated from *Ibn 'Umar*. It says:

It is recommended that you go towards the grave of Prophet (s) from the *Qiblah* region while the *Qiblah* is behind you and you are facing the holy grave. You should then say:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Prophet, and may the blessings and the mercy of Allāh be upon you."

Here it is necessary to note two points: the first being the recommendation of facing the grave and having your back towards the *Qiblah*. This is only possible when the pilgrim is standing in front of the Prophet's (s) face; apparent from the above mentioned sayings and rulings. However, if one stands in front of the head of the grave, it is not necessary to turn the back to the *Qiblah* but rather the *Qiblah* will be on his right side. But in the above mentioned books, among the necessities, is the recommendation of facing the grave and turning the back to the *Qiblah*. The pilgrim must stand in front of the Prophet's (s) face and recite the visitational greetings (*Ziyarat*). However, the book *Eanat al-Talebin al-Bakri al-Dumyati* does not imply the above, because he states that the pilgrim first offers the mosque-salutation prayer and,

"Then he comes to the holy grave from the head side of the Prophet (s)."

He does not emphasize turning ones back to the *Qiblah* but rather claims that coming from the side of his holy head is more respectful. Therefore, if he is facing his holy head, the *Qiblah* will be on his right side, and what he means by *Riyad al-Jannah* is the space between the grave and the pulpit, as reported by many others and as has been mentioned in the narrations from the Prophet (s). An example is what Hafas ibn Asem and Bukhari quote from Abu Hurairah:

The Messenger of Allāh (s) said: "The space between my grave and my pulpit is a garden from the gardens of heaven and my pulpit is upon my pool."

In the margin of *Rad al-Muhtar*, Ibn Abedin has said:

Riyad al-Jannah is attributed to the whole of the *Nabawi* mosque just as the space between the grave and the pulpit; just as some scholars have clearly stated that what is meant by it is both the space between the grave and the pulpit and the whole of the Nabawi mosque.

From this definition, the meaning of the word *Tijah* (opposite to) and the word *Wajh* (face) of the Prophet (s) becomes apparent. According to the first meaning (where the space between the grave and the pulpit is what is meant by *Riyad al-Jannah*) it is not possible to stand in front of the Prophet's (s) face.

Briefly, whoever wants to stand in front of the Prophet's (s) face will inevitably not be included in the first meaning of the *Riyad al-Jannah*, as its commonly known meaning is the space between the grave and the pulpit and is above the Prophet's (s) head and not in front of his face. Therefore, when the scholar's say one should intend to stand in the *Riyad al-Jannah* and stand in front of the Prophet's (s) face, they mean it must be the whole mosque because the commonly known meaning is not in front of the face but rather it is on the side of the head of the Prophet (s).

Firstly, this reasoning is not correct. The majority of those who have said that you intend to be in the illuminated *Riyad al-Jannah* and enter it, have clearly stated it to mean the space between the grave and the pulpit. The Abu Hurairah tradition also testifies to this.

Secondly, what they mean by saying "stand in front of the Prophet's (s) head" is not to stand in front of the face when you are in the *Riyad al-Jannah*, because it is not possible to stand in front of the face when there. What is meant is that after entering the *Riyad al-Jannah* and praying before the pulpit or in the Prophet's (s) place of prayer, you leave it and go and stand in front of the face while your back is to the *Qiblah*. Thus in the majority of these sayings, they have said:

"Then he should face the noble grave."

Other similar comments which do not imply the common meaning of *Riyad al-Jannah* as being the entire mosque, and are in agreement with,

"He must leave the *Riyad al-Jannah* and come and stand in front of the holy face with the *Qiblah* behind him."

Thirdly, there is no disagreement in greeting (*Salutations (salam)*) and reciting the visitational greetings (*Ziyarat*) in front of the grave, whether one has his back to the *Qiblah* while standing opposite the

face, or standing towards the grave from the head side with the *Qiblah* on his right side (just as how the Shia and majority of Sunnis stand when reciting supplications). However, can he recite supplications at the head side of the holy grave or must he move and stand facing the face, opposing the *Qiblah* and recite the supplications?

In response to this question, following Ibn Taymiyyah, the Wahhabis say: For supplication, he must stand facing Qiblah and it is not permissible to stand facing the grave and ask *Allāh* for something."

In the treatise called *Ziyarat al-Quboor*, Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"When the companions came to the grave of the Prophet (s), they would greet him and when they wanted to pray, they would not face the grave but rather divert and face Qiblah and like other holy places only call upon *Allāh*."

We have cited more than ten cases of Malaki, Hanbali, Hanafi and Shafi'i scholars in the chapter on 'imploring for assistance', in which they all said that standing facing the grave for supplication is permissible or more preferred.

We must pay special attention to the conversations and dialogues that took place between Malik and Mansur Dawaniqi, the 'Abbasid Caliph, in the holy shrine. This is because Abu Ja'far Mansur asked Malik, the Maliki Imam, being his follower: "Am I to face the Qiblah and pray or must I face the grave of the Prophet (s)?" He replied: "Why should you turn your face away from the grave when it is your means and your father Adam's (a) means to *Allāh* until the Day of Judgment. You must stand towards the grave and place him as your intercessor."

Thus by referring to the rulings and general sayings of all sects and doctrines other than Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers, the answer to this question becomes clear. It seems that Ibn Taymiyyah assumed that praying while standing facing the grave of the Prophet (s) and asking him for something is a kind of polytheism. Therefore, he said he must face the Qiblah and only call on *Allāh*, whereas, in the Qur'an it says:

﴿فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّواْ فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"….So whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allāh! Allāh is indeed all-bounteous, all-knowing." [1]

There is no relation between praying towards the *Qiblah* and polytheism and paying attention to others than Him. For further explanation refer to the chapter in which we mentioned the saying of Ibn Taymiyyah and the response to it.

13) The pilgrimage of the Prophet (s) is necessary after performing Hajj. This is because of the tradition *Ṭabrānī* narrated from the Prophet (s) that said:

"Whoever performs Hajj and does not visit me has wronged me."

In another narration he quotes the holy Prophet (s) as saying:

"Whoever performs Hajj and performs the pilgrimage of my grave is like someone who has visited me during my lifetime."

He then writes:

"It is worthwhile for someone intending the pilgrimage of the illuminated city of Madina to take two things into account. Firstly, because of what was previously mentioned about the virtues of the three mosques ('Do not prepare for journey unless for three mosques, my mosque (the Prophet -s-) *Masjid al-Haram*, *Masjid al-Aqsa*'). The second is because the pilgrimage to the Prophet (s) is one of the most recommended actions and is the best means to get close to *Allāh* with it and is enough to gain the intercession and neighbourhood of the Prophet (s) in paradise.

"When a pilgrim sees the walls of Madina, he should send blessings upon the Prophet (s) with a loud voice. He should say:

"Oh *Allāh*! This is the Mausoleum of your Prophet (s), so make it my protector from hell fire and a shield against punishment and dishonesty."

While entering Madina, he should say:

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1. *Surah Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 115.

"*Allāh*! Oh, Creator of the skies, Lord of the earth and whatever is standing. Oh, Lord of the winds and whatever has scattered! I want the well-being and goodness of this city and its people and whatever is inside it! I seek Your refuge from the evil of this city and whatever is inside it and from the evil of its people! This is the Mausoleum of your Messenger (s), therefore, make my entering it my protection from hell fire, and a shield from punishment and dishonesty".

"After settling somewhere he should perform the ritual washing and put on his nicest clothes and perfume himself. Then he should go towards the blessed mosque in humility and pay homage to the Prophet (s). He should then enter the mosque in the manner mentioned previously for entering mosques. After that he should recite the mosque- greeting prayers. Thereafter he should stand up and go towards the noble grave of the Prophet (s). He should face the grave with his back towards the *Qiblah* in full humility and say:

"Peace be upon you, Oh Messenger of Allāh! Peace be upon you, Oh the first created being of Allāh!"

"Then he should take a step towards the right and stand. Then he should say:

"Peace and blessings of Allāh and his invocation be upon you, Oh Abū Bakr!"

Again, he should take another step right and say:

"Peace and blessings of Allāh be upon you Oh 'Umar!"

"At this stage, he should return to his first place and stand and read *Surah Fatiha* or *Surah Yasin*, or however much he can from the holy Qur'an and gift its rewards to them. Then,he should pray for himself, his parents, his friends and all Muslims and ask for their well-being in this world and the next. After prayers, the best worship in this dignified and pure shrine is the recitation of the Qur'an which descended there, as well as send blessings on the owner of the grave."

The following point should be taken into consideration when he says:

"It is worthwhile for someone intending the pilgrimage to the illuminated city of Madina to take two things into account: the first of

the two is the pilgrimage to the *Nabawi* mosque and the second, the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (s)."

Therefore there is no problem in only intending the pilgrimage to the Prophet (s) and setting off for the sake of it, but it is more desirable if he intends both.

Supplicating and seeking blessings from the pulpit of the Prophet (s)

1) Samhudi wrote regarding the disciplines of visiting the illuminated Mausoleum and shrine of the Prophet (s):

Among the disciplines is to come near the noble grave of the Prophet (s) and stand there and call *Allāh* and praise and thank Him for making his path easy. Another discipline is to send blessings on the Prophet (s) and ask for all the goodness from *Allāh* and seek refuge in Him. This is exactly what Aqshahri said.

In continuation, Aqshahri says: "I saw some of the companions of the Prophet (s) who, when in the mosque, would halt in front of the dome of the pulpit, face the Qiblah and recite supplications."

In *Kitab al-Sheaf*, Ayaz wrote from Abi Qasit and Atbi (may God bless them both):

"When the companions of the Prophet (s) (may God be well pleased with them) were in the mosque of the Prophet (s), they would hold the dome beside the grave with their hand and pray facing the *Qiblah*."

Abū Bakr Athram says:

"I asked Abu Abdullah (Ahmad Ibn Hanbal): 'Is touching the grave of the Prophet (s) permissible?' He replied: 'I do not know!' I said: 'How about the pulpit?' He said: 'Yes, there is a narration quoted in this regards from Ibn Abi Fadak, who quoted Ibn Abi Zaeb, from *Ibn 'Umar* (May God be pleased with both of them) that he (*Ibn 'Umar*) would touch the pulpit.'"

This matter is quoted from Sa'id Ibn Mosayeb regarding the domes of the pulpit before they were burnt down. It is also narrated from Yahya Ibn Sa'id, the master of Malik, that 'when he intended to leave for Iraq, he would come to the pulpit, touch it and pray, and I have seen him encouraging this matter.'

2) It is said in one of the chapters of *Sharh al-Hadith*:

Touching and kissing the walls of the grave of the Prophet (s) is not recommended but there is a narration about touching the pulpit which is quoted by *Ibrāhīm Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abd al-Qaderi* in which he says he saw *Ibn 'Umar* first touching the seating place of the Prophet (s) them placing his hands on his face.

3) Bohouti has quoted the same narration from *Ibn 'Umar* in *Kashef al-Qena*.

4) In *Neil Atwar* by Shoukani, it says:

It is quoted that once somebody asked Imam Ahmad regarding kissing the pulpit and the grave and he considered this matter unproblematic. However some of the companions regard the correctness of this matter to be very little.

5) It is quoted in *Sharh al-Kabir* by Ibn Qudamah that Athram said:

Now about touching the pulpit, *Ibrāhīm Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abd AlQaderi* has narrated that he saw *Ibn 'Umar* first touching the seating place of the Prophet (s) on the pulpit and then placing his hand on his face.

Circumambulation around the grave of the Prophet (s)

According to Sunnis, circumambulation around the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh(s)* is unlawful and has been forbidden. Now we shall point to some cases in this regard.

1) It is written in Hawashi Sherwani wa Ebadi":

It is recommended to offer prayers in the mosque. That was in the time of the Prophet (s), because a prayer in that mosque is equivalent to one thousand prayers. However, circumambulation of the grave must be avoided. Also praying in the Hujrah, intending veneration of the Prophet (s) must also be avoided.

This statement, using the Arabic phrase "*Wal Yahdhar*", implies emphatic forbiddance of circumambulating the grave and going around it no matter what the intention or the motive be. This is because praying in the illuminated Hujrah has been confined to intentions of glorification. Circumambulation however has

unconditionally been forbidden and warned about. (The house of the Prophet (s) and the location of his grave were open in those days and it was possible to go to the Hujrah and pray there.)

2) Muhayyuddin Nawawi wrote:

Case: Circumambulation around the grave of the Prophet (s) is not permitted and ….

3) Mohammad Ibn Sharbini said:

Circumambulation around the grave of the Prophet (s) must be avoided. Also, praying in the Hujrah with the intention of glorification must be refrained from.

4) In the book *The manners of the Nabawi Shrine*, Samhudi wrote:

'Touching and kissing the walls of the grave of the Prophet (s) and circumambulating around it and praying towards it must also be avoided.' Nawawi says: 'Circumambulation around the grave of the Prophet (s) is not permissible.'

5) In *Tohfah*, Ibn 'Asakir wrote:

Touching and kissing the holy grave of the Prophet (s) is not a custom. Circumambulation around the grave is also not a custom and is just what the ignorant did. This act is rather undesirable and impermissible.

6) Bohouti wrote:

The Sheikh says: Circumambulation around other than the ancient house is forbidden according to a consensus.

Types of circumambulation around the grave

It is possible to perform several kinds of circumambulation around the grave of the Prophet (s) or other noble sites and the grave of Prophets (a), Imams (a) and the saints based on the intention.

A) As worship: Performing circumambulation around a grave, just like circumambulation around the house of *Allāh* (which is an act of worship) is an innovation, and circumambulation under this title and with this intention is only exclusive to Ka'bah.

B) When the circumambulation is performed because it is recommended and desirable and not as worship, it is also an innovation and performing it with this kind of intention is not correct, just like any act performed because it is recommended, not ordered, and is performed with the assumption that the person is performing a desirable and popular act and not intending to worship.

C) The performer (of circumambulation) is only going around the grave because the owner of the grave is his beloved and he is doing this out of affection and love. Considering it worship is akin to someone who goes around his child or friend and sometimes utters: 'I will sacrifice myself for you.' It is not possible to call this kind of circumambulation useless, futile, ineffectual, because it has not been ordered, and there are no rewards or bonuses following it. It is just a form of expressing love and affection. Why and for what reason must it be forbidden? To forbid a matter and consider it inacceptable requires proof. There must be some form of proof that such an act is impermissible. This will be discussed in the chapter on *Imploring for Assistance*.

Apparently those who have considered circumambulation forbidden meant the first kind, as worship, whereas the common people and those who perform circumambulation around the grave of the Prophet (s), the Imams (a) and the saints are not at all performing it as an act of worship and their view of this act is not worship.

There are no reasons given for its prohibition.

D) The other kind is the one performed to seek blessings, and not worship. Seeking blessings from the grave of the Prophet (s) was put forward at the beginning of this chapter and we said that seeking blessings from anything that is related and attached to the Prophet (s) was done all the time and was customary among the Muslims in the early days of Islam.

Since the grave and shrine have encased the body of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*, people aim to attain blessings by circumambulating around them.

Kissing and rubbing hands on the grave of the Prophet (s) and the dust on it

Numerous sayings have been enumerated in the Sunni books:

1– Showing these acts as neither recommended nor a custom

2– Discouraging or detesting them

3– Permitting without mention of any detestability

Now we shall point to some of these sayings:

Abd al-Rahman Qodamah wrote: 'Touching the walls of the grave of the Prophet (s) and kissing it are not recommended.' Ahmad says: 'I do not know the ruling for it.' Athram says: 'I saw the Madanite erudite not placing their hands upon the grave of the Prophet (s), they rather stood to one side and sent blessings upon him.' Abu Abdullah says: '*Ibn 'Umar* (May *Allāh* be pleased with him) also used to do as such.' *Ibrāhīm ibn Abd al-Qari* narrates that he saw *Ibn 'Umar* putting his hand on the seating place of the Prophet (s) on the pulpit and then rubbing his hand on his face.

The non-existence of desirability has been emphasized in these statements. However, rubbing hands on the pulpit is an exception because of what has been quoted from *Ibn 'Umar*.

It is written in Hawashi al-Sherwani wal Ebadi:

'Placing ones back and stomach on the wall of the grave (of the Prophet -s-), rubbing ones hands over it and kissing it are extremely discouraged. The discipline of it is rather to stand at a distance from the grave the way one would have stood in the presence of the Prophet (s) during his life.'

Until he gets to saying: And kissing it is discouraged. On the footnote he says: Even if his intentions of kissing are to pay respect.

He also says: in *Jana'ez*, after noting the detestability of kissing coffins, the exact wording and ruling on this are remarked.

"Yes, as Walid (the father of the author of the book *Hawashi al-Sherwani wal Ebadi*) says: 'There is no discouragement on kissing the shrine to attain blessings from it.'

Thus it is possible to use the same criterion as the basis for this issue. It is possible that these two issues are different, the difference being that the companions used to avoid reverence of the Prophet (s) for the sake of not resembling the Christians. The Christians would rever Prophet Jesus (s) in an exaggerated manner and even claim that he is god. For this reason, the scholars prohibited people from praying in the Hujrah with the intention of revering the Prophet (s).

Muhayyuddin Nawawi wrote:

Abū Mūsā says: *Imām Abū al-Hassan Mohammad ibn Marzūq al-Za'farāni*, a research scholar, has said in the chapter of *Jana'ez* of his book: (The pilgrim) must not rub his hands over the grave and must not kiss it. This is what was customary before, today, embracing graves and kissing them is what the common people do, and legally (based on religious law) it is a denied innovation. It is necessary to avoid this act and forbid it. He has said: 'Whoever intends to send greetings upon the dead must do it from his face side. If he later intends to pray, he must change his location and pray towards the *Qiblah*.'

Abu Musa says: the knowledgeable Khorasani scholars have said: 'When on the pilgrimage to the grave, it is recommended that the pilgrim faces the dead while *Qiblah* is behind him while he greets, but must not embrace the grave or kiss it or even touch it since this is the habit of Christians.' (He also says): 'And what they have mentioned is correct because it is right to forbid grave honouring, in view of the fact that embracing the two Shami corners of Ka'bah are not recommended, as it was not a custom, even though embracing the other two corners are recommended.' Using these descriptions, rubbing ones hand over the grave is not recommended through the first way, (since it was not a custom from the beginning), and *Allāh* is the Most Aware.

Some of the definitions used by Abu al-Hasan Mohammad ibn Marzooq Zaferani indicate forbidding these affairs, such as: "And legally, it is one of the denied innovations. It is necessary to avoid this act and forbid the one who performs it."

However the words of Nawawi, mentioned below, indicate reluctance.

Muhayuddin Nawawi wrote:

Circumambulation around the grave of the Prophet (s) is not permissible, and placing the stomach and the back on the walls of the grave are undesirable. The words of Abu Abdullah Halim, Mohammad ibn Sharbini, and others are: rubbing ones hands over or kissing the grave of the Prophet (s) is undesirable. The discipline is rather to stand away from the grave like the way he would stand in the presence of the Prophet (s) when he was alive.

Obeying the traditions and sayings of the scholars is correct and one must not be misled by the common people, the ignorant, and the others.

Bohouti also wrote:

It is said in the book *Sharh wa Sharh Al-Muntaha*: The grave and its walls must not be touched and the chest must not be placed on them and it must not be kissed. This means these acts are not desirable as they are impolite and a kind of innovation.

Unlawfulness:

1– Bohouti wrote:

And the Sheikh has said: 'Circumambulation around other than the ancient house (Ka'bah) is unlawful based on the consensus.' He has also said: 'Scholars have a consensus that the grave must not be kissed or touched since this act is polytheistic, and *Allāh* will not forgive polytheism no matter how small.' Abu al-wefa Ali ibn Aqil and Abu al-Faraj Abd al-Rahman Ibn Jozzi have said: 'It is undesirable to pray (to ask for something) from the grave, therefore, travelling for this purpose is not right.' The Sheikh also said: 'Pausing before the grave for prayers is undesirable.'

2– About this, *Sheikh Sayyid Sābiq* wrote:

And they must avoid rubbing their hands upon the Hujrah (i.e. the grave and kissing it) since these are among the issues the Prophet (s) has prohibited. Abu Da'ud narrates from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (s) said: 'Do not make my grave a place of visitation, rather send blessings upon me as only your blessings and greetings (*Salutations (salam)*) will reach me from wherever you are.' Abdullah

ibn Hasan said to a man who was intending to pray next to the grave of the Prophet (s): "Oh Man! The messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: 'Do not make my grave a place of visitation, rather send blessings upon me as your blessing will reach me from wherever you are. Oh Man! There is no difference between you and the man in Andalusia for this matter."

3– We quoted a saying from Abu al-Hasan Marzuq Za'farani in the "sayings on undesirability" that apparently showed unlawfulness and regarded kissing and rubbing ones hands over the grave as a legally dispraised innovation.

4– Samhudi says:

Touching the shrines or the graves of the Prophets, the saints and the great people of religion, and kissing them are the habits of Christians and Jews. Aqshahri says: Zaferani has said in his book that placing hands on grave walls, touching and kissing them, are among the innovations that have been legally negated. It has been narrated that when Anas ibn Malik (May *Allāh* be pleased with him) saw a man placing his hand on the grave of the Prophet (s), he warned him and said: "We do not regard this in accordance with the time of the Prophet (s), whereas Malik, Shafe'i and Ahmad were extremely opposed to it.

It is of course clear that in the time of the Prophet (s), placing a hand on the grave of the Prophet (s) never took place, which puts an end to this argument. However, concerning placing hands on graves in general, (which apparently is the case) then there is a difference between the grave of the Prophet (s) and other graves, thus this argument cannot be used to negate placing hand on the grave of Messenger of *Allāh(s)*.

5– It is said in "Tohfahh" by Ibn 'Asakir:

Touching the holy grave (of the Prophet -s-) and kissing and circumambulating around it, what the ignorant do, is not a custom, rather undesirable and not permitted. Standing away from the grave is more in accordance with respect for it. He then narrates from Abu Naem and says: Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Fares informed us that Abu Ja'far Mohammad ibn Asem informed us of a tradition that Abu Osama heard from Abi Abdullah, who heard from Nafe' who

informed us of a tradition that said *Ibn 'Umar* (may *Allāh* be pleased with both of them) regarded excess touching of the grave of the Prophet (s) undesirable.

This narration implies that *'Umar* regarded excessive hand rubbing on the grave of the Prophet (s) undesirable.

In response to the third saying, it is said that: the reasoning on the prohibition is apparently baseless and tampered with, and we have pointed them out below:

1– The reasoning in Kashf al-Qena' is that:

Rubbing ones hands on the grave and kissing it are not permissible because it is polytheistic and no matter how little or small polytheism will not be forgiven.

Probably what they mean is polytheism-in-worship and not the other kind of polytheism. As we said at the beginning of this chapter, none of the acts, including circumambulation, kissing or rubbing ones hands on the grave is worship and is rather a form of reverence. Such a person does not view the grave, the pulpit and the pillars as God or the Creator, and does not worship them, so it cannot be called polytheism-in-worship. Some consider parts of these acts contrary to manners and respect. *If something is contrary to manners and respect towards the owner of the grave, then how can it be counted as his worship?*

2– The reasons *Sheikh Sayyid Sābiq* uses on the unlawfulness of kissing the grave and the Hujrah of the Prophet (s) is the prohibition by the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) and he has quoted a narration that Abu Da'ud quoted from Abu Hurairah that the messenger of *Allāh* (s) said:

"Do not make graves your houses and do not make my grave as a place to come and go."

None of these narrations however negate kissing, touching and circumambulating around the grave with the intention of seeking blessings. Yet, there are several probabilities in the narration:

"Do not take my grave as a place of visitation"

A) It may mean not holding gatherings at the grave on a certain day only, or for a certain group.

B) The point may be not to go on the grave pilgrimage once a year only, similar to how New Year is celebrated. Rather go to its pilgrimage often. Allamah Amini says: "This is how the most aware of the tribes define it."

C) The reason for the prohibition of touching the grave and kissing it is that it is an innovation and is legally dispraised.

In response to this it must be said that the grounds mentioned in the fourth saying for the legality and permissibility permit such affairs and even some of the great people among the companions, including Abu Ayyub Ansari, Bilal Habashi (the prayer caller of the Messenger of *Allāh*) and Fatimah (s), the daughter of Messenger of *Allāh (s)* used to perform such acts. The later generation of the Prophet's (s) companions also used to seek blessings from his grave and put their hands on it and kiss it.

Moreover, the permission of kissing and touching the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) has been quoted from Ahmad ibn Hanbal. All these will be mentioned in the fourth saying.

4– Someone asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal about kissing the grave and the pulpit. In reply he said: "It is allowed and there are no problems with it." There are also sayings from some other Shafe'i scholars that do not see any problem with kissing and embracing the grave of the pious ones.

5– In *Tohfahh* by Ibn 'Asakir, a narration quoted from Nafe' is used as the reason for the prohibition of kissing, touching and circumambulating around the grave. He has said: *Ibn 'Umar* discouraged excessive touching and kissing the walls of the grave and circumambulating around the grave. He also said: "Touching and kissing the walls of the grave and circumambulating around the grave is not my custom."

In response to this, it must be said:

Firstly, the reason for claiming that such an act is not customary (as mentioned by *Ibn 'Umar*) only implies discouragement of excessive touching of the grave and not prohibition. It does not show any implication on the primary principle of undesirability. It rather points to excessiveness.

Secondly; this saying is in contradiction with the other saying from *Ibn 'Umar* that said: *Ibn 'Umar* would place his right hand on the noble grave. The word *Kana* in this saying suggests continuation.

This saying is also in contradiction with the saying from Bilal, the close companion of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*. If the reasons for negating these affairs as an 'individual's custom' is the absence of any exact text in these cases, then the fourth saying, which approves touching and kissing and other such acts that only honour and revere the Prophet (s), is enough.

Ibn Majeh has said in his Sunan that *Abū Bakr* kissed the Prophet (s) when he was dead, and kissing the grave of the Prophet (s) is similar to kissing him after his death. When kissing the grave of parents is a custom and recommended, then kissing the grave of the Prophet (s) is more deserving of being a custom.

The late Sayyid Mohsin al-Amin quotes from Kefayah al-Sha'bi, Fatawa al-Ghara'eb, Mataleb al-Mo'menin, and Khizanatu Rewayah that they have said:

There is no problem with kissing the grave of the parents because once a man came to the Prophet (s) and said: "Oh Messenger of *Allāh*! I have sworn to kiss the doorway to heaven and the forehead of a *Hour al-Ayn*. The Prophet (s) commanded him: "Kiss the feet of your mother and the forehead of your father." He said: "Oh Messenger of *Allāh*! What am I to do if my parents are not alive?" The Prophet (s) said: "Kiss their graves." He asked again: "And If I do not know where their graves are?" The Prophet (s) replied: "Draw two lines; one as your mother's grave and one as your father's grave. Then kiss these two lines so that you don't break your oath."

6– Samhudi has quoted from *Ehaya al-'Ulum* by Ghazali that: Touching the shrines and kissing them are among the habits of Jews and Christians.

To answer this, it can be said that firstly these acts; i.e., seeking blessings from the grave of the Prophet (s) and rubbing hands on the grave and the pulpit were the habits of Muslims and some great companions of the Prophet (s), including Abu Ayyub Ansari and Bilal. The likes of *Ibn 'Umar* and those that came from the generation after the Prophet (s), also had this habit.

Secondly: Its being a custom of the Christians does not make it unlawful. Only if there are any reasons in the Muslim law forbidding it, would it become unlawful, not simply because it was a Christian or a Jewish custom. There are numerous matters that are permissible in Islamic law which were permissible in the previous religious laws. *It is not that every customary law in the previous scriptures, whether obligatory, or recommended was abrogated or announced as forbidden in Islam.*

7– In *Tohfah*, Ibn 'Asakir says: "Standing away from the grave is a better form of respect." Disrespect is a better reason for undesirability. The main reason is impudence and disrespect. The argument was based on the fact that during the lifetime of the holy Prophet (s) and in his presence, the discipline was to stand at a distance and avoid stopping for long.

To answer this, it must be said that the deeds that are performed with the intention of attaining blessings and expressing affection are not impolite. During the lifetime of the Prophet (s) and in his presence, sitting close to the Prophet (s) and touching or kissing him or his cloth for blessings was not impolite or any kind of disrespect towards him. This was what the companions used to do.

Bukhari said the Prophet (s) used to perform ablution (*Wudu*) and read his Zohr (noon) prayer. Then people would stand up and hold the hands of the Prophet (s) and rub it on their face. The narrator of this tradition, Abu Juhayfah says: 'I also held the Prophet's (s) hand and put it on my face and it was colder than snow and more scented than the best perfumes.' Therefore, such events also took place during the lifetime of the Prophet (s) and were not considered disrespectful or impolite. After his death, placing ones hand on his grave or other acts as such is also not disrespectful or impolite.

At the end of this part of the discussion, it must be taken into account that those who regard touching or kissing the grave as undesirable, appreciate the difference between the grave of the Prophet (s), the saints and other graves. In the case of the grave of the Prophet (s) and the saints, they do not consider touching or kissing the grave as undesirable if it is for the sake of seeking blessings.

Fourth: Sayings on the permission and negation of the above

1– In this respect, Ibn Hajar wrote:

"The deduction of some scholars from the permissibility of kissing the corners of the *Ka'bah* has been the permissibility of reverence for whomever or whatever deserves reverence, including man or any object. Somebody asked Imam Ahmad about kissing the pulpit and the grave of the Prophet (s). He regarded it as unproblematic. But, some of his followers have deemed the correctness of this unlikely. The permissibility of kissing the Qur'an and parts of the Hadith (tradition) and the grave of the pious ones has been quoted from Ibn Abi Saif as 'opportunities given by *Allāh*!"

2– Samhudi wrote:

Eez says: Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal has quoted narrations of Abi Ali ibn Souf from his father in the book called *Al-Elal wa Sualat* and says: 'I asked my father about the man who touches the pulpit of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)* to seek blessings from it and kisses it and does the same to the grave of the Prophet (s) in hope of reward, and he said: "There is no problem with this act." Eez ibn Jomah says: 'This saying will render null the entire transmitted consensus (Ijma Manqol) from Nawawi. I say: Nawawi has not stressed transmitted consensus. It is the power of his words that show consensus."

3– Rejecting Ibn Taymiyyah on the issue of visitation (*Ziyarat*) Subki says:

"There is no consensus on the prohibition on touching the grave." He then narrates the following incident which Allamah Amini quotes from Da'ud ibn Abi Saleh:

"One day, *Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam* confronted a man who had placed his forehead on the grave (of the Prophet). *Marwān* gripped his neck and said: "Do you know what are doing? The man, who was Abu Ayyub Ansari, turned to him and said: "Yes, I am not holding stones but have come into the presence of the Messenger of *Allāh (s),* who said: 'Do not cry for religion when its custodian and guardian is a man worthy of it, however, cry for religion when its guardianship is undertaken by a perverse person.'"

Allamah Amini then says: "Hakim has quoted this event in the *Mustadrak* and deems it to be correct. This has also been quoted by another group."

After this, he says: "This story tells us that preventing the imploring for assistance at the pure grave since the time of the companions is an Umawi innovation. This negation of imploring for assistance and seeking blessings from the grave of the Prophet (s) has not been reported from any of the companions other than the ones born from Bani Umayyah; such as *Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam*.

4– Samhudi says:

"When Bilal was in Syria and desired to visit the Prophet (s), he came to the grave and rubbed his face on it." The proof of this narration is good (i.e. strong).

Allamah Amini has quoted the story of Bilal in *The History of Syria* (*Tarikh e Sham*, A book written by him) from Ibn 'Asakir and in *al-Ghadir* from nearly ten famous Sunni scholars.

Using evidence from Tahir ibn Yahya, Ibn 'Asakir says in *Tohfah*: My father quoted a tradition for me from my grandfather who heard it from Ja'far ibn Mohammad (a) who had heard it from his father who had heard it from Ali (a) who said: "When the Prophet (s) was buried, Fatimah (a) stood on top of the grave and grabbed a fist size from the soil on the grave and placed it on her eyes and cried, reciting this verse:

He who smells the soil of Ahmad / Shall never see hardship and misery

If the tragedies that struck me fell upon days, / They would have turned into nights

Allamah Amini has quoted this incident in *al-Wefa* from Ibn Jozi, in *Sirah Nabawiyya* from Ibn *Sayyid* Nas, in *Al-Mawaheb* from Qastani, in *Sharh al-Shamel* from al-Qari, in A*l-Etehaf* from Shabrani, in *Solh al-Akhawan* from al-Khadi, in *Mashareq al-Anwar* from al-Hamzawi, in *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* from al-*Sayyid* Ahmad Zeini Dahlan and some other famous scholars.

5– Khatib Ibn Hamlah states: "*Ibn 'Umar* (r) used to always place his right hand on the noble grave of the Prophet (s). Also Bilal (r) used to place the two side of his face on it. He then says: There is no doubt that the extent of affection is attributed to the admissibility of his act and the intention from these acts is merely respect and reverence and people's levels are different in this issue based on their class. This is just how it was during the lifetime of the Prophet (s). When some people saw the Prophet (s), they could not restrain themselves and held the Prophet (s) tightly and some others would forbear and stand back. These are all signs of kindness and goodness."

6– Hafiz Ibn Hajar says:

"It is quoted from Ahmad that once he was asked about kissing the pulpit and the grave of the Prophet (s). He deemed this issue as unproblematic but some of his followers did not deem his word correct. The permissibility of kissing the Qur'an and parts of the traditions and the graves of the pious ones has been quoted from ibn Abi Saif Yamani who was one of the Shafe'i scholars in Mecca."

Tayyeb Nasheri has quoted from Mohib Tabari: "Is kissing the grave and touching it permissible? He said: "The pious scholars used to do it and then he recited this poem:

If I saw any traces of my faultless friend / I would prostrate on it thousands of times

I will journey in search of my beloved's land / I will kiss this wall and that house

It is not the love of the land / But love for the resident of that land

7– Samhudi says:

"Some of them have quoted from Abi Khathimah that he said: Mosab ibn Abdullah narrated a tradition in which *Ismā'īl ibn Ya'qub Taymi* said that Ibn Munkadar used to always sit with his followers. He said: Ibn Munkadir used to sit in silence until when he would suddenly get up in that state (of silence) and place his face on the grave of the Prophet (s) and return. He would then get reproached by people because of this act. In response he would say: "Indeed, when I am in discomfort I seek remedy from the grave of the Prophet (s)."

He would roll and rub himself on a location in the yard of the mosque of the Prophet (s) and would rest and sleep there. He was questioned as to what he was doing? In reply he said: "I saw the Prophet (s) in a dream showing me this location."

8– Samhudi says:

In the book called *Al-Ehya'*, some scholars say: If by placing a hand on the grave, a handshake of the dead is intended, it is hoped that there are no problems with it. In any case, following the majority of scholars is more worthy.

9– Samhudi says:

"A consensus is concluded on the virtues of the grave that is encasing the holy body parts (of the Prophet -s-). It is even more virtuous than the grand Ka'bah. After this they have concluded on the virtues of Mecca and Madina and other cities. However, there are disagreements on the superiority of one over the other. *'Umar Ibn Khattab* and his son Abdullah and Malik ibn Anas and the majority of people in Madina are of the view that Madina is superior. Some of them have given good views and said: The disagreement is not on the noble Ka'bah because there is consensus on the superiority of the Ka'bah over Madina other than the place that is encasing the body of the Prophet (s). The story of the consensus on the virtues of the noble grave of the Prophet -s-) has been quoted by Qadi 'Iyad and before him by Qazi Abu Walid Baji as it had been told by Khatib Ibn Jomlah. Also Abu Yaman ibn 'Asakir and others have iterated this and emphasised on the virtues of the noble Ka'bah. Taj has also quoted this.

By quoting the above consensus, we can conclude the superiority and preference of that part of the land in Madina that contains the body of the Messenger of *Allāh*, over other lands, even the *Ka'bah*. Seeking blessings from the grave and the likes of it, such as the clothes or saliva or the water on the hands of the Prophet (s), or seeking blessings from his body are what the companions used as a source of sanctity.

Samhudi quotes from Hasan Hanbali who quoted from Malik, the chief and Imam of the Malakite, that even though he was weak due to old age, he never rode an animal in the lands of Madina and said: 'I

will not ride on the land in which the body of the Prophet (s) is buried.' This is the extent to which he granted respect to the land that is encasing the body of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*.

10– We mentioned the story of the Arab man who came three days after the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) was buried. He dropped himself on the grave and poured soil on his head. This story has been narrated from Amir ul-Momenin (a) and all Muslims and companions witnessed it. Nobody objected to this act. Allamah Amini has quoted this event from eight Sunni books.

11– It is written in the book *al-Ghadir*:

"In the book *Fath al-Mutta'al be Sefâtu Nal*, Allamah Ahmad ibn Mohammad Muqri Maliki (deceased 1041 A.H) quotes from Wali Adin Iraqi that Imam Ahmad was asked about kissing the grave and the pulpit of the Prophet (s) and he said: "There is no problem in it."

Abu Sa'id ibn Ala says: I showed that writing to Taqi ibn Taymiyyah. He was astonished by the words in it and said: 'I am surprised by Ahmad whom I held in great respect! Are these his words or the interpretation of his words?' Abu Sa'id replied: "What astonishment is there in these words while we have received a narration about Imam Ahmad that he washed Shafe'i's cloth and drank that water with which he had washed the cloth? If this is the way of respecting the people of knowledge, then what will be the ruling on the value of the companions of the Prophet (s) and also the traces of the holy Prophet (s) (may *Allāh* bless them all)?"

This is mentioned in the footnotes of *al-Ghadir* and it says that this event i.e. washing the cloth of Shafe'i, is quoted by Ibn Jozi in Manaqeb Ahmad and by Ibn Kathir in the history written by him.

Shafe'i's son, Mohammad Ibn Ahmad Ramli (deceased 1004 A.H), the master of the masters of the Shafe'i doctrine says in *Sharh al-Menhaj*: "Shadowing the grave, kissing and embracing the coffin over it and the doorways when visiting the saints is undesirable unless it is for the sake of attaining blessings just as the ruling of my father. The scholars have emphasised that if someone is incapable of embracing the grave, it is permissible for him to point with a stick and kiss the stick."

In the footnotes he says: 'By combining the two narrations in *Sahih* and *Musnad* by Abu Davoud, Hamidi has said: the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) would point towards *Hajar al-Aswad* (the black stone) with his stick and kiss the stick.

13– It is said in *al-Ghadir*:

Following the words of the author Abu al-Abbad Ahmad Ramli Kabi Ansari, the master of masters said in the margin of the book by *Roaz al-Talib* which is printed in the margin of the book *Asna al-Matalib,* about the disciplines of visiting the grave (that the pilgrim must only get close to the grave as much as he would have when the grave owner was alive). It is said in *Kitab al-Majmu*: '(The pilgrim) shall not embrace the grave for sending his greetings (*Salutations (salam)*), and face Qiblah to pray.' Abu Musa Isfahani has told us: 'Yes, if it is the grave of the Prophet (s) or a leader (*Wali*) or a scholar, then there is no problem in kissing or embracing the grave for the sake of attaining blessings.'

14– Allamah Amini says:

Zarqani al-Mesri Maliki has said in Sharh al-Mawaheb:

"Kissing the noble grave of the Prophet (s) is undesirable unless it is for the sake of attaining blessings. This form is not undesirable." This is also what Ramli believes.

15– It is said in *al-Ghadir*:

"In the margin, Sheikh *Ibrāhīm Bajouri* wrote Ibn Qasem Ghazzi's descriptions of the text Sheikh Abi Shoja had written, concerning Shafe'i jurisprudence. He said: "Kissing and embracing the grave are undesirable. This ruling also applies to the coffin placed on top of the grave. It is also undesirable to kiss the doorways when entering (the shrine) for visitation (*Ziyarat*) of the saints unless it is for the sake of attaining blessings. In that case it is not undesirable. If he is not capable of this due to a large crowd or other reasons such as mixing of men and women, similar to what happens in the Ziayarat of *Sayyid* Ahmad Badawi, he can stand in a location that is possible to stand in and recite as much Qur'an as he can and point his hand or anything else to the grave and then kiss that object. This is because the scholars have emphasised that if (the pilgrim) is unable to embrace the black

stone, it is permissible for him to point to it with a stick and then kiss it."

16– It is said in *al-Ghadir*:

"After quoting the mentioned statement from Ramli Madkur in the book *Kanz al-Matalib* and the book *Mashareq al-Anwar*, Sheikh Hasan Adwi Hamzawi Maliki says: 'Thus, there is no doubt that kissing the noble grave (of the Prophet -s-) is only for the purpose of attaining blessings. Therefore, the permissibility of this is superior to the permissibility of kissing the grave of saints for the sake of blessings. This is the meaning of what Aref has said, especially because the grave of the Prophet (s) is one of the gardens of heaven.'

Fifth: The outcome of the visit

As previously said, the Sunni scholars have made some conclusions regarding visitations to the holy shrine of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) that emphatically recommend visiting the shrine. We shall now examine some of the conclusions concerning the visitation of the Prophet (s):

A) Intercession

1– There is a tradition that Dar Qutni, Bayhaqi and some others have quoted from Musa Ibn Hilal who quoted from Nafe' who quoted from *Ibn 'Umar* who stated that the Prophet (s) has said:

"Whoever performs the pilgrimage of my grave, my intercession will become obligatory for him."

There is another narration that Bazzar has quoted from *Ibn 'Umar* through *Abdullah ibn Ibrāhīm Ghifari*. It says:

"Whoever visits my grave, my intercession will also benefit him."

2– The narration that *Ṭabrānī* in Jamiah Kabir and Ousat and Dar Qutni in Amaliyah and some others have quoted from *Ibn 'Umar* who stated that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever comes to my grave while he is a pilgrim and has no other need except my visit, I am indebted to him and will be his intercessor on the day of Judgment."

In Mujam, Ibn Muqri has quoted from Muslimah who quoted from Abi Abdullah ibn *'Umar* who quoted from Nafe' who quoted from Salim who quoted from *Ibn 'Umar* who stated that the messenger of *Allāh* has said:

"Whoever comes to me while he is my visitor, *Allāh* shall be indebted to him to place me as his intercessor on the day of judgment."

The difference between this quotation and the one before is that this one says that it is the visitor to whom *Allāh* shall be indebted.

Hafiz Ibn Madkur has mentioned this Hadith in a book he has called Al Sunan al-Sahih al-Mathorah which means the correct traditions from the Messenger of Allāh (s), in the chapter The rewards for the one who goes to the visit of the grave of the Prophet (s), and has promised to collect the traditions on which there is a consensus on correctness in his book. This tradition is among those on which there is a consensus.

The late Allamah Amini has quoted this tradition from sixteen Sunni books and resources.

3– In the Medinite tradition, Ibn Najar has narrated with evidence from Malik Ibn Anas who stated that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever visits me while I am dead is the same as the one who visited me when I was alive, and whoever visits my grave, my intercession shall become obligatory for him on the Day of Judgment. Any one from my nation who is financially capable but does not come to visit me has no excuse left."

The financial constraint is taken into account only when the visitor has to travel (to visit the grave).

The above mentioned tradition has been quoted from six Sunni books in *Kitab al-Ghadir*.

4– Yahya has narrated a narration with evidences from Bikr Ibn Abdullah that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever comes to Madina while he is intending to visit me, my intercession shall become obligatory for him on the Day of Judgment."

B) Bearing witness

1– Abu Ja'far 'Aqili has narrated from the Prophet (s) using evidence from Ibn 'Abbas:

"Whoever visits me when I am dead is like someone who has visited me while alive and during my lifetime, and whoever visits me and reaches my grave, I will be his witness and deponent."

C) Bearing witness and intercession

1– *Ibn Abi Donya* has narrated from *Ismā'īl* ibn *Abi Fadik* who narrated from Solayman ibn Yazid Kabi who narrated from Anaz ibn Malik that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever visits me in Madina, I will be his intercessor and witness on the Day of Judgment."

Bayhaqi has quoted this tradition from the same chain of narrators using these words:

"Whoever visits me in Madina with the intention of proximity to *Allāh*, he will be next to me on the Day of Judgment."

The author of *al-Ghadir* quotes the mentioned tradition from twenty one books of the narrators of traditions who quoted this from Anas ibn Malik.

2– Abu al-Fotuh has narrated from Khalid ibn Yazid who narrated from *Abdullah ibn 'Umar* who said that Sa'id Maqbari said: I heard *Abu-Hurayrah* say that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever visits me after my death is as one who has visited me while I am alive. I will be his witness or intercessor on the Day of Judgment".

3– *Abū Da'ud Tayalisi* narrated from Sawwar ibn Maymun who said: 'A man from the family of *'Umar* read a tradition to me and said: 'I heard the Prophet (s) say:

"Whoever visits my grave (or, whoever visits me) I will be his intercessor or witness."

This tradition is quoted from eleven Sunni books in *Kitab al-Ghadir*.

Bayhaqi has also quoted this tradition using his own set of evidence and what is meant by the sentence "whoever visits me" includes the visit after the demise of the Prophet (s).

4– Using his own evidence, Abu Ja'far 'Aqili has quoted from Ibn 'Abbas that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever visits me after I am dead is like someone who has visited me during my lifetime and whoever visits me and reaches my grave, I shall be his witness and deponent or intercessor."

This tradition has also been quoted by Ibn 'Asakir.

This tradition is among the clearest traditions that imply the permission for setting off on a journey to visit him (s), as it says:

"Whoever visits me and reaches my grave,"

5– Through an uninterrupted transmission chain, Bukhari quoted from the Messenger of *Allāh (s)* that he said:

"Whoever sends blessings (*Salawat*) on me beside my grave, *Allāh* will appoint an angel to deliver his blessings (*Salawat*) to me and *Allāh* will make him self-sufficient in the affairs of this world and the next world. I shall be his witness and deponent and intercessor on the Day of Judgment."

D) In the presence of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*

1– Abu Ja'far quoted the same narration from Sawwar ibn Maymun who heard a man from the family of Khattab saying: the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever visits me will be next to me on the Day of Judgment and whoever passes away in one of these two holy places; *Allāh* will place him among the protected ones on the Day of Judgment."

This tradition has been quoted by Allamah Amini from eight books by Sunni narrators of tradition including Dar Qutni, Ibn 'Asakir and Bayhaqi.

2– Ibn Askair quotes from Ali ibn Abi Talib (s) that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever asks *Allāh* for the rank of intercession (*Wasilah*) of the Messenger of *Allāh*, the intercession is lawful for him and whoever visits the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*, he will be next to him (on the Day of Judgment)."

E) Visiting the Prophet (s) in his lifetime

1– Dar Qutni and others have quoted from Harun ibn Qoza who quoted from a man from the family of Hateb who had heard from Hateb that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever visits me after my death is like the one who has visited me during my lifetime."

The mentioned tradition has been quoted from thirteen Sunni books in *Kitab al-Ghadir*.

2– The narration that is quoted in Jamiah Kabir and Al- Ousat by *Ṭabrānī* from *'Āishah bint Yūnis* who quoted from *'Umar* that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever visits my grave after my death is like the one who has visited me during my lifetime."

3– Dar Qutni in Kabir and *Ṭabrānī* in Al-Ousat and others including Bayhaqi in his Sunan, have quoted from *Ibn 'Umar* with some evidence that the Prophet (s) said:

"After my death, whoever performs Hajj and then visits my grave is like the one who has visited me during my lifetime."

Ibn Jozi has narrated this tradition in *Mathir Al-Gheram A-Saken* with his evidence from *Ibn 'Umar* and the addition of "and he will be in my company."

"After my death, whoever performs Hajj and then visits my grave is like the one who has visited me and has been in my company during my lifetime."

This tradition has been quoted in the book *Kashf al-Ertiyab* from Suyuti in his book *Al-Jamiah Saghir* and from Ahmad in his *Sunan* and Abi Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Nesaee.

The late Allamah Amini has quoted this tradition from twenty five Sunni tradition books.

F) Not visiting being disdainful towards the Prophet (s)

1– It is narrated from the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) that:

"Whoever is financially capable but does not come to me, he has truly shown disdain towards me."

This tradition has been quoted in *al-Ghadir* from *Manasek* by Ibn Farhan and *Ehya al-Ulum* by Ghazali and in *Al- Mihab Al- Diniyya* by Qastalani and in *Kashf al-Ertiyab* by Ejluni.

2– It has been quoted from Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) that he gives a narration through two people in which he quotes the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) saying:

"Whoever visits my grave after my death is as one who has visited me during my life. The one who does not visit me has certainly shown disdain towards me."

The second quotation says:

"Whoever does not visit my grave has been disdainful towards me."

In *al-Ghadir*, this tradition has been quoted from nine Sunni books who have quoted from Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) who quoted from the Messenger of *Allāh (s).*

3– In *Kamel*, Ibn Uday has narrated from Mohammad ibn Mohammad ibn No'man, who said: My grandfather narrated a tradition for me saying: Malik narrated a tradition from me from Nafe' and he was narrating it from *Ibn 'Umar* that the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said:

"Whoever performs the Hajj pilgrimage but does not visit me, he has truly been oppressive towards me."

This tradition is quoted from a group of memorizers and narrators in *al-Ghadir*. The names of nine of them have been mentioned. Dar Qutni has also narrated this from Mailk with the same evidences.

At the end, as we previously discussed, many of the Sunni scholars and jurists have compiled numerous writings about visiting the holy shrine of the Messenger of *Allāh (s).* Among them is Bakr Dumyati who says:

"Point: visiting the grave of the Prophet is a custom that has been emphasized upon. When the words of the author about the rituals including the pillar, the obligations and the recommendations come to an end, he starts discussing what is the accentuated right upon every Muslim especially the Hajj pilgrim which is the visit to our master, the messenger of *Allāh*. It would have been more suitable if he (the author) had delayed this (topic) like the other recommended acts, after the forbidden acts of Ihram (the state of pilgrim sanctity). Be aware that there are disagreements on this visit. Many have given the ruling of "an emphasised custom" to it and some have considered it as obligatory. Some scholars have approved their view and the words of the author that say: 'It eventually shows that this visit is an emphasised custom even if the visitor is performing the Hajj or Umrah pilgrim. However, this visit is more so stressed upon for those who are performing the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage as they are in close range to the shrine. After being so close, abandoning the pilgrimage is detestable. The other reason is the tradition:

"Whoever performs Hajj but does not come to my visit has been disdainful towards me."

However this tradition does not limit the visit to Hajj as the visitor may not be a pilgrim. The saying of the author that says: because of the traditions that have come to us about the virtues of visit including the tradition that says the Messenger of *Allāh (s)* said:

"Whoever visits me after my death is as he who has visited me during my lifetime."

Also the other saying from the Prophet (s):

"Whoever visits my grave, my intercession shall become obligatory for him."

This means that the intercession of the Prophet (s) for those who have not visited him is only a possibility.

Also the other saying from the Prophet (s) that says:

"Whoever comes to visit me, all his needs will be fulfilled and *Allāh* is indebted to him to place me as his intercessor on the Day of Judgment."

Bukhari has narrated that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever sends blessings on me before my grave, *Allāh* has appointed an angel to deliver it to me and *Allāh* will make him self-sufficient in his affairs of this world and next world. Whoever visits Mohammad's (s) grave, he will receive his intercession on the Day of Judgment. For God's sake, remember and send upon him constant blessings so that you may be guided. He is the chosen Messenger (s) who is generous and has bounty and is munificent. His intercession during the fear of the promised day is accepted among people. The most pleasant location on the Day of Resurrection will be his special pool. Oh *Allāh*! Send blessings on him as long as the Furqan (the star that never dawns) is shining."

Some scholars have said there are ten miraculous gifts for the visitor of the Prophet's (s) grave. They are as follows:

- He will be given the highest ranks.
- He will accomplish his highest ambitions.
- His wishes will be implemented.
- Bounties will be bestowed upon him.
- He will be protected from destructions and corruptions.
- He faults shall be erased.
- Hardship and tragedies will become easy for him
- He will be protected from disasters.
- He will have a prosperous destiny
- The Creator of the east and the west will send blessings on him.

May he, who visits the best creature, the Prophet (s) and abandons sin, enjoy it all! Truly, prosperity is guaranteed for the one who purifies himself or visits the Prophet (s).

Permission of the journey to visit the Messenger of Allāh(s)

One of the beliefs of *Mohammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab* is that travelling for the purpose of visiting the graves of the Prophets, the saints and the pious ones is impermissible. Thus visiting the grave of the Prophet (s) is only recommended for the people of Madina and not for others. However, if one travels to Madina to pray in the mosque of Messenger of *Allāh (s)*, his journey is permissible. In the second treatise of *al-Hidaya al-Sinaya* treatises, regarding this *Mohammad ibn Abd Al- Wahhab* says:

"The visitation of the Prophet (s) is a custom, however, one should not set out on a journey unless to visit one of the three mosques and pray there."

It must not be forgotten that the Sunni scholars have written several books in which they have fully explained a number of traditions that *Abu Hurairah* has forged and included in the narrations from the Prophet (s). They have quoted his narrations in several forms. One narration that Abu Hurairah quotes from the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) is:

"Do not travel unless to three mosques, this mosque (the Prophet's (s) mosque in Madina), *Masjid al-Haram* and *Masjid al-Aqsa*."

The other form of the narration is:

"Do not travel unless to (visit of) three mosques, Ka'bah mosque, my mosque (in Madina) and Ilia mosque."

Ibn Tamiyyah and Mohammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab have used these narrations as the basis of their belief that visiting the Prophet (s) is forbidden.

Paradox in Wahhabi belief

What clearly implies the prohibition of this affair is the first tradition which says: "*Do not travel unless to three mosques…*". As you can

see in the Arabic text of this tradition in the footnote, the reason is the Arabic word *la*. This *la* is a negation which indicates prohibition.

La tashuddu al-rihal means going to places other than these three locations must not take place.

Now we must find out what the exception in the sentence "other than these three mosques" is. There are two probabilities.

The *first probability* is that the exception can be the term Mosque. If so, the meaning of this tradition will be if you want to travel to a mosque, you must not do so except to these three mosques. Then what is the problem with us travelling to the grave of the Prophet (s)? This journey is for visiting the grave of the Prophet (s) or one of *Allāh*'s saints, we would not be travelling to a mosque to make it impermissible.

The *second probability* is to consider the command a general command that would mean the impermissibility of travelling to any location other than the three mosques. This would mean that any journey other than the journey to one of the three mosques would be forbidden. Can anyone undertake this responsibility and say all journeys including business, visiting family, etc., are forbidden? What could possibly be the reason for their impermissibility?

If we claim that the tradition implies all spiritual journeys, then it would imply those who travel to seek knowledge, partake in holy war, or to visit family have no permission to do so, whereas, these are either obligatory or recommended rituals commanded by Almighty God in Qur'anic verses and by the Prophet (s) in narrations:

A)

﴿فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُواْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُواْ قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوٓاْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ﴾

"…But why should not there go forth a group from each of their sections to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware?" [1]

B)

﴿ٱنفِرُواْ خِفَافًا وَثِقَالاً وَجَٰهِدُواْ بِأَمْوَٰلِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

"Go forth, whether [armed] lightly or heavily, and wage jihad with your possessions and persons in the way of Allāh. That is better for you, should you know?" [2]

C) The Prophet (s) said:

«صِلوا أرحامكم ولو على مسيرة سنة»

"Visit your relatives even if the journey for it takes a year"[3]

D)

﴿وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ حِجُّ ٱلْبَيْتِ مَنِ ٱسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلاً ۚ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِىٌّ عَنِ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"…And it is the duty of mankind towards Allāh to make pilgrimage to the House for those who can afford the journey to it and should

1. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 122.
2. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 41.
3. *Safinat al-Bihar*, 1/115.

anyone renege [on his obligation], Allāh is indeed without need of the creatures." [1]

We must therefore admit that the prohibition refers to the three mosques. Now that the meaning of the prohibition is clear, we can conclude that it is not related with visiting the Prophet (s) or the Imams (a).

This tradition in itself does not have any weight due to its narrator (Abu Hurairah) being a fabricator of traditions. In the eyes of the Shia, such a tradition is inacceptable.

Now we must focus on the purpose of this prohibition. Has the messenger of God truly prohibited travelling to any mosques other than these three? If so, what if a person comes across a beautiful historical mosque and decides to see it for pleasure, or its design to build another mosque like it? Has such a person committed a sin because it is not one of the three mentioned mosques? He has definitely not committed a sin. What is then meant by this prohibition? Can one say that travelling to a mosque for worship and seeking virtues is unlawful and not for other purposes? So, if a person is in a city that does not have a mosque, he travels to a place that has a mosque, in order to pray, his trip is unlawful because of what the tradition says? Therefore, the conclusion is that the mentioned prohibition is not one that prohibits but one that guides. The proof lies in what is mentioned in the *Sahih* and *Sunan* that the Prophet (s) used to pray in the Quba mosque on Saturdays.

This means the Prophet (s) is trying to say that if you want to undertake a journey that includes seeking virtues, it must be to travel to one these three mosques. He is prohibiting travelling in general that is not for these three mosques. The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) is saying do not put your selves in trouble for no reason, as all the mosques except these three mosques (i.e. *Masjid Al-Haram*, *Masjid Al-Aqsa* and *Masjid Al-Nabbi*) are the same and not superior over the other in virtues. The virtues of the mosque in your city is the same as the mosque in X- town or in any village, so what is the need for you to put your selves in trouble and set off on a journey to mosques that are equal in virtue with your mosque. In fact, this is a prohibition by the

1. *Surah Al 'Imran*, Chapter 3, verse 97.

Messenger of *Allāh* (s) to guide mankind and not to prohibit all legal travelling. Therefore the conclusion is:

Firstly, this tradition does not hold weight since Abu Hurairah is accused of forging traditions.

Secondly, the prohibition of this tradition refers to mosques; therefore it no longer has any relation to visitations and is beyond the scope of this discussion.

Thirdly, the prohibition in this tradition is one of guidance and not boycott. The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) only wanted to guide and advise the faithful that it is only these three mosques that are worth travelling to. Other mosques are equal in virtue and you do not need to put yourselves in trouble.

Analysing the Sunni viewpoint

In order to clarify the topic of travelling for visitations, it is necessary to analyse three topics:

- First, the sayings of Sunni scholars.
- Second, the traditions on the permission for visitations.
- Third, the recommendation of the visitation for Hajj pilgrims and non Hajj pilgrims.

First: The sayings of Sunni scholars

It is necessary to mention that the pre-requisite for the application of the words of those scholars who categorically consider visiting the grave of Prophet (s) recommended, the recommendation is for all Muslims, whether in Madina or outside Madina, far or near, and, whether they need to travel for it or not. As we know, a majority of people are required to travel for this purpose since the number of Muslims outside Madina is far greater than those inside.

The following are quotations of those who consider such a pilgrimage as permissible:

1– Ghazali has regarded the journey to visit as worship. It is quoted from him in Wafa' al-Wafa' that he said:

"Whoever visits, the visitation is a blessing during his lifetime, and shall also be a blessing after his death. To visit him (s) for this (i.e. blessings) is permissible."

2– Samhudi uses the following verse as his reasoning:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمْ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا﴾

"…And had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allāh for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allāh all-clement, all-merciful." [1]

He says that this verse includes the distant and those who are near. He also uses the tradition:

"Whoever visits my grave and whoever comes to me with the intention of my *ziyarat*…"

Since the visitation itself is recommended, the travelling for it must be as well. After Ohud, the Prophet (s) travelled to visit the martyrs of Ohud. This shows that travelling to visit a place of great distance is also permissible. If it is permissible to travel to see the martyrs of Ohud, it must definitely be permissible to visit the Prophet (s), and his visitation is superior to any other. There is, infact, a consensus amongst the scholars regarding this matter.

3– Mawerdi has said that our companions have said that after the Hajj pilgrims have completed their stay in Mecca, the caretakers of the Hajj pilgrimage should guide the people towards the city of the Messenger of *Allah* (s) so as to pay their respects to him. They should then rise for his obedience. Even though the matter is not compulsory, it is amongst the most highly desirable deeds.

4– Mohammad ibn Sherbini wrote:

In every journey the prayer is shortened. It does not make any difference whether the journey is an obligation like the journey for

1. *Al-Nesa'*, Chapter 4, verse 64.

Hajj, or a recommended one like the journey for visiting the grave of the Prophet (s), because permissible includes both the compulsory and the recommended.

5– Among the issues and principles of being hired for Hajj is one principle that was asked about from Sheikh Mohammad ibn Abi Zeid. This principle was that, if a person hired for performing Hajj on behalf of another, receives a sum on the condition that he visits the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)* but, he is not able to visit it that year. What must he do?. He replied: he must return the sum of money he received for it (i.e. the visitation). The person who has recounted this story from him says, that other scholars have said he is obligated to go back for the second time to visit the shrine of the Prophet (s). However Abd al-Haqq has said that if in that year he was specifically hired for Hajj and the visitation, then the sum for the visitation must be deducted. But if he was hired for Hajj, then he is under obligation to perform Hajj and at the same time the visit of the grave of the Prophet (s). In this case, he must return and visit the Prophet's (s) grave. Anyhow, in the view of these scholars, the journey to visit the grave is permitted.

What we mean by the above mentioned is that the ancestors of the Sunni Scholars, who discussed these matters, gave no indication of the unlawfulness of a journey for the purpose of visitation.

6– The late Allamah Amini says:

The common ruling among all the previous and existing Muslims is that if anyone cannot travel to visit the Prophet (s), he can hire someone; and, Oman Ibn Abd al-Aziz has been commonly quoted as always sending a messenger from Syria to Madina to send *Salutations (salam)* on his behalf and return.

Another statement says that he always sent a messenger from Syria to Madina into the presence of the Messenger of *Allāh(s)*. This is mentioned by Bayhaqi in the book *Shu'ab al-Iman* and by Abū Bakr Ahmad ibn 'Amr Nili (deceased 287A.H) in his *Manask* and Qadi 'Iyad in *Kitab al-Shifa* and Hafiz ibn Jozi (in the book *Muthir Algheram wa Sakan)* and Taqi Adin Subki in *Shefa' Al-Seqam* page 42, and by many others.

It is said in *al-Ghadir* that, the superiority and desirability of visiting the grave of the Prophet (s) and the undertaking of the journey for it, has been agreed upon by scholars of the four schools of thought.

7– Ibn Abedin wrote:

"And the graves should be visited every week, as said in *Mukhtarat al-Nawazel* which, in the explanation of Lubab al-Manasek, says: however, Fridays, Saturdays, Mondays and Thursdays are preferred for this act.

Mohammad ibn Wase' says: The dead will be informed about their visitors on Fridays or a day before or after, therefore, Friday is superior. He also said: Visiting the Martyrs of Ohud is recommended because of the narration quoted by Ibn Abi Shaybah which says the Prophet (s) used to come to the Ohud Martyrs every year and say: "Peace be upon you because of your patience and resistance! How beautiful is the reward in the next world!"

This visitation is preferred on Thursdays in a state of purity around morning so that one may perform the noon prayers in the Nabawi mosque.

These sayings show the recommendation of the pilgrimage even if the place of visit is far. Is the journey for visiting also recommended as it was the custom of the people who went to visit Prophet *Ibrāhīm* (s) and his family and children? And is the visit of Badawi *Sayyid* and other respectful great people the same? I have not seen any of our Imams (a) making any mention of this. However some of the Shafiite Imams have forbidden this journey unless it is for visiting the Prophet (s). Ghazali has rejected this prohibition because of the clarity of the issue that all mosques except the three are equal in virtue and thus there is no benefit in travelling towards them. However, the saints and great people are different to one another with regards to nearness to *Allāh*. The benefits gained by the visitors are different based on their inner souls and knowledge.

8– Bakri Dumyati wrote:

The author says: Travelling on Friday is forbidden for the one on whom the Friday prayer has become obligatory even if it has not yet been held), even if it is a journey for worship. This comment negates

the old saying that all journeys before noon are forbidden with the exception of a journey which entails worship.

The author says: The journey, whether recommended or obligatory, it would have been more appropriate to use the words *Manduban* or *Wajiban* instead of the words *Manduban* or *Wajiban* to mean worship in general e.g. recommended worship such as the visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) and obligatory worship such as Hajj.

9– Mawaheb Hattab Rahini wrote:

Sayyid Samhudi in the history of Madina, after mentioning Shafe'i's comments regarding vowing to visit the grave of the Prophet (s), and 'Abedi, in *Sharh al-Risalah* says, from the Malakite:

"Making vows to go to visit Masjid al-Haram in Mecca has legislative roots which are Hajj and 'Umratu Tamatu'. Thus when a person makes a vow to go to one of these three places, his vow will become obligatory (to perform). In the case of Mecca, an agreement has been reached on this issue. There are, however, differences amongst the companions regarding the other two mosques.

10– Shokani wrote:

"The visitation of the Prophet (s) has been considered by a group of companions, including Bilal, who told Ibn 'Asakir (good evidence exists in this), and *Ibn 'Umar,* who told Malik in the book on *Mota*, and Abu Ayyub, who told Ahmad, and Anas, which is mentioned in *Kitab al-Shifa'*, and Ayaz and *'Umar* to Bazzar, and Ali (a) to Dar Qutni, and other people. Travelling to visit has not been quoted from any of them as it is quoted from Bilal. He saw the Prophet (s) in a dream telling him: "Oh Bilal! What disdain is this? Is this not time you visited me?" This narration has been reported by Ibn 'Asakir. Those who consider the visit obligatory have used the tradition:

"Whoever performs Hajj but does not visit me has truly been disdainful towards me."

This tradition was discussed previously. They have said: Disdain towards the Prophet(s) is forbidden thus the visit becomes obligatory. The response of the majority is that abandoning the recommended is what is meant by disdain, similar to abandoning goodness and generosity. Also, as said in the tradition:

"Whosoever harboured hatred was oppressive."

Disdain shows hard-heartedness and crudeness. Also taking into consideration the way of the past generations, a tradition on its own cannot be placed as the basis of proof and reasoning. Those who considered the visit unlawful used the following tradition as their evidence:

"One must not travel to a mosque except the three mosques."

This is in *Kitab al-Sahih* which was previously mentioned. The other reason narrated by Abd al-Razzaq is the tradition:

"Do not place my grave as your place of coming and going."

In *Sharh al-Muslim*, Nawawi said:

"There are differences among scholars regarding travelling to other than the three mosques such as going to the grave of the pious ones and other virtuous places. Sheikh Jawaini believes it to be unlawful and Iyad has pointed towards the view of the Sheikh."

"The response of the majority to the tradition "Do not travel unless to the three mosques…." Is that the restriction here is relative and not factual. The argument they have used is: this is what some of the authentic narrations say:

"Travelling to a mosque for the purpose of praying is not commendable unless it is to these three mosques: My mosque (the Prophet -s-), Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Aqsa. Thus visitation (*Ziyarat*) and other forms of travelling are not included in this prohibition."

There is a second response to the above reasoning which is that, travelling for business and other worldly affairs is definitely permissible. Furthermore, travelling to Arafat and Mina and Muzdalefah for the devotional rituals of Hajj, travelling for holy jihad and migrating from pagan lands is recommended.

11– Muhy al-Din Nawawi wrote:

Going to Baqi' eveyday, especially on a Friday, is recommended and it should be done after sending blessings on the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*. Once the person reaches Baqi', he should read the supplication in *Kitab al-Jana'ez*. This supplication includes: "Peace

be upon you, Oh land of pious people! And God willing, we will join you. Oh *Allāh*! Forgive the people of Forqan (a star that never sets). Oh *Allāh*! Forgive us and them." Then he should visit the pure graves in Baqi', such as the grave of *Ibrāhīm,* the son of the Prophet (s), *Uthman*, *al-'Abbas*, *al-Hasan ibn Ali*, *Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn*, *Mohammad ibn Ali*, *Ja'far ibn Mohammad* and the rest (may God be pleased with them all), and he should end his visit by visiting the grave of *Safiyah* (May God be pleased with her), the aunt of the Prophet (s).

12– *Sherwani* and *Ebadi* wrote:

"The author says: Visiting the graves is recommended…. In *Sharh al-Ebab*, he says: It is not a custom to travel to visit the grave of other than the Prophet (s), a scholar, or a pious man. This is in contradiction to the saying of *Jawini,* in which he said: 'Travelling for such a visitation is (end of the words in *Sharh al-Ebab*).

Azraee has said in the text of *Mughnee*: "Apparently recommendation of this issue is when the journey is for the sake of visitation (*Ziyarah*)."

13– Abdullah ibn Qodamah wrote:

Ibn Aqil has said: Whoever travels to visit the graves of nobles, shall no longer be considered a traveller (i.e. the rules such as the shortening of prayer do not apply to him), as such a journey is prohibited for him.. There is also an agreement regarding the saying of the Prophet (s), "Do not travel unless it is to there mosques..."

However, the correct view is that the journey and the shortening of prayer is permissible, as the Prophet (s) used to always go to Quba either walking or mounted and visit the grave of the faithfuls and would always say: "Visit the graves so that they remind you of the next world."

14– Ibn 'Abedin wrote:

"Visiting the martyrs of Ohud is recommended because of the narration Ibn Abi Shabih narrated: Every year the Prophet (s) would visit the grave of the Ohud Martyrs.

In the chapter on the acts of companions and followers, we mentioned narrations from the Sunni Musnads that showed the great importance Muslims paid to this issue.

Second: Analysing the permission of travelling in traditions

Now we shall proceed with the traditions that indicate the permission for travelling for the purpose of visit. These narrations are of two kinds. The first kind attributes grant the permission for travelling only to visit the grave of the Prophet (s). The second clearly emphasise the permission of travelling for the purpose of visiting.

Now, the first kind is the application of the following noble verse:

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ وَلَوۡ أَنَّهُمۡ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمۡ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسۡتَغۡفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسۡتَغۡفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابٗا رَّحِيمٗا﴾

"We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allāh's leave. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allāh for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allāh all-clement, all-merciful." [1]

This verse has been used by Subki and Samhudi as the argument legalising visiting the grave of the Prophet (s). This is because the verse encourages mankind to come and repent before the Prophet (s) during his life and after his death. The scholars have made general use of this verse for both states of life and death and considered reading this verse and repenting as desirable for the one who comes to the grave.

In most cases the prerequisite for coming to the grave of the Prophet (s) is travelling, whether far or near, and it is not exclusive to the people of Madina.

It must also be noted that the visitation *(Ziyarat)* is nothing but the presence of the visitor. Sending *Salutations (salam)* is not even a part of the visitation *(Ziyarat)* and the verse shows the desirability of coming to the Prophet (s) for the sake of repenting before him.

1. *Al-Nesa'*, Chapter 4, verse 64.

Second: These are the narrations in which the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) has shown the benefits (of his visit) such as: his intercession, (the Prophet -s-) bearing witness, and attaining his neighbourhood (in paradise). All these spiritual benefits necessitate the permission to visit his holy shrine.

The second kind are narrations that emphasize the permissibility of the journey. Most of these narrations are recommendations of the visit *(Ziyarat)* while on a Hajj journey, whether before or after the Hajj, this deed is inevitably a neccessity of the journey. These are such as:

1– Dar Qutni and Ṭabrānī in *Kabir* and *Ousat*, and others such as Bayhaqi in his *Sunan* have quoted (traditions) using the evidence of *Ibn 'Umar* in which he said:

"The Messenger of *Allāh* said: "Whoever performs Hajj and then visits my grave after my death is like one who has visited me during my lifetime."

This tradition has been narrated by Ibn Jawzi in *Muthir Algheram* and by Askan, using the evidence of *Ibn 'Umar* with the addition; "And he has been in my company."

This tradition has also been quoted in the book called *Kashf al-Ertiayb* by Soyuti and in *al-Jamiah Asagheer* and by Ahmad in his *Musnad* and Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Nesa'i.

The late Allamah Amini has also quoted this tradition from twenty five Sunni tradition books. The other form of this tradition is:

"After my death, whoever performs Hajj and visits my grave is as the one who has visited me during my life time and has been in my company."

2– Ibn Oday has narrated in *Kamel* through Mohammad ibn Mohammad ibn No'man that:

"My grandfather narrated a tradition to me and said: Malik narrated a tradition from the Prophet (s) through Nafe' and Nafe' had heard this tradition from *Ibn 'Umar*: Whoever performs Hajj and does not visit me has truly been disdainful towards me".

This tradition is quoted in *al-Ghadir* through a group of memorizers and tradition narrators and the name of nine of them is mentioned.

Dar Qutni has narrated this tradition from Malik using the same evidence.

3– In the second point Abul Fath Azdi makes through Amr ibn Mohammad using his evidence from Abdullah, he recounts (a narration) from the messenger of *Allāh (s)*:

"Whoever performs Hajj and visits my grave and does Jihad (Crusade) and prays in Bayt al Maqdis, *Allāh* will not question him of what was obligatory on him (i.e. his obligatory deeds as a Muslim)."

4– Some tradition memorizers have quoted from Ibn 'Abbad using the evidence that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever performs Hajj, and then intends to visit me in my mosque, two blessed Haj will be recorded for him."

5– Yahya has narrated from the Prophet (s) with evidence from Be'r Ibn Abdullah that the Prophet (s) said:

"Whoever comes to Madina with the intention of visiting me, my intercession shall become obligatory for him on the Day of Judgment."

6– It has been quoted from Talha ibn Abdullah in *Sunan* Bayhaqi and other Sunans that:

"We accompanied the Prophet (s) while he intended to visit the grave of the martyrs of Ohud."

In the time of the Prophet (s), the distance from Madina to Ohud was about six kilometers and crossing this distance was considered travelling.

He then adds:

"Once we had reached the grave of the martyrs, the Prophet (s) said: 'These are the graves of our brothers.'

Thus, based on this tradition, the sayings of the ordinary scholars, and Muslim conduct, the visit to the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) is recommended, and travelling for it is inevitably permissible. The narrations on visiting the graves of the faithful have been quoted from the Prophet (s) in common books such as *Sunan Nesaee* and *Sahih Muslim*. These traditions say that the Prophet (s) used to visit the

graves and say: "Go and visit the graves." *'Āishah* has also said: "The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) has given permission for visiting the graves."

Third: the recommendation of visiting the pure Musoleum of the Prophet (s) for Hajj pilgrims and non-pilgrims

In this section we will analyse the issue through two points:

1– The recommendation of visit for pilgrims from the Sunni point of view after the Hajj ceremony.

2– The recommendation of the visit for non-pilgrims and the performers of Umratu tamatu from the Sunni point of view.

1– The recommendation of visit for pilgrims from the Sunni point of view after the Hajj ceremony

When we look at the Sunni books we see that all those who wrote about Hajj, have put forward the recommendation of visiting the grave of the Prophet (s). This shows that not only is visiting his grave permissible, rather it is a recommendation that has been stressed upon. The reason behind this is that the Hajj ceremony is performed in Mecca and the grave of the Prophet (s) is in Madina, and if anyone wants to go to visit the Prophet (s), he must travel from Mecca to Madina and this journey is regarded as the journey for his visit.

This was and still is an unchanged Muslim act.

Based on the beliefs of Mohammad ibn Abd al Wahhab, we must say that all those who have visited the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) during the course of Islamic history, whether before the Hajj ceremony or after it, have committed an unlawful act and *Allāh* will punish them or consider their reason for travelling to Madina as only to pray in Masjid al-Nabbi and not to visit the grave of the Prophet(s). *If you ask all those on the way to Madina as to why they are going there, they will say to visit the grave of the Prophet (s) in Madina. Because if it was only for the sake of praying in Masjid al-Nabbi,* then, why didn't anyone go to Masjid al-Aqsa after or before the Hajj rituals, since praying there is the same as praying in Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Nabbi? Also, why wouldn't they stay in Masjid al-Haram, which is one of the three mosques and pray there? What is the need to put

himself in trouble and cross the distance between Mecca and Madina only to perform two rakas of prayers in Masjid al-Nabbi?

Accordingly, the truth is that they are going to visit the grave of the Prophet (s) and not only to pray there. It has been an unremitting act of all haji's to go to Madina after performing the Hajj ceremony to visit the grave of the Prophet (s).

Here it is worthy to quote the words of Shareh: in *Al-Taj al-Jameh Lel Osul Fi Ahadith al-Rasoul* (written by Sheikh Mansur Ali Nasef – a scholar from al-Azhar). In his conclusion of *Kitab al-Hajj* he says:

Point: The visitation *(Ziyarat)* of the Prophet (s) after performing Hajj is stressed upon as narrated by Ṭabrānī as the tradition from the Prophet (s) who said: "Whoever perfroms Hajj but does not visit me has been disdainful towards me."

When intending to visit holy Madina, it is worthwhile to make two intentions. The first of which is visiting the Nabawi Mosque due to what was previously mentioned about the virtues of the three mosques (i.e. the impermissibility of travelling to any mosque except the three mosques: the Prophet (s)'s mosque, Masjid al-Aqsa, Masjid al-Haram).

The second intention is visiting the Prophet (s) which is the most virtuous of the desirable acts and the best tool for nearness to *Allāh* and is enough to gain the intercession and neighbourhood of the Prophet (s) in paradise.

2– Muhayyuddin Nawawi wrote:

"Be aware that the visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) is among the most important tools for getting close to *Allāh* and the most redeeming effort. Thus when the Hajj pilgrims and Umratu tamatu piglrims return from Mecca, it is stressed upon to turn towards Madina for the sake of visiting the Prophet (s). The pilgrim is to seek nearness to *Allāh* by travelling to the Prophet (s) and sending blessings upon him. When he starts begining to see the Prophet's (s) shrine, he shall increase sending blessings and peace on him while he is crossing the way and once he sets eyes on the trees of Madina and the shrine and whatever is connected to it, he will add to the blessing

and peace he sends on the Prophet (s) and ask *Allāh* to let him benefit from this visit and accept it from him."

3– The great scholar Amini says:

The scholars of the four schools of thought disagree on the whether the merits of Hajj are greater or the merits of visiting the Prophet (s).

In *Shefa' al-seqam* pp: 42, Taqi Adin Subki says:

Previous scholars (may *Allāh* bless them all) disagreed as to whether it was better to begin the journey of Hajj from Mecca and then go to Madina or whether one should travel to Madina first. Imam Ahmed is among those who emphasised this issue and mentioned the disagreement amongst the scholars in the book *Al-Minasek al-Kabir*. These rituals (Minasek) have been narrated by Hafiz Abul Fadhl from his father using the evidence of Abdullah ibn Ahmed. These rituals have questioned the person who starts the Hajj journey from Madina before Mecca. Using the evidence from Abd al-Rahman ibn Yazid and Atta and Mujahid, he says: "When you decide to go to Mecca, start from Mecca rather than Madina. If you want to go to Madina, go once you have finished Hajj." He then mentions the evidence from Aswad who said: "I like beginning the journey (Hajj) with my camel and food supplies from Mecca." It has been quoted from *Ibrāhīm* Nakhaee and Mujahid: "If you decide to go to Mecca put everything after it, if you decide to perform Hajj or Umratu tamatu, start from Mecca and place everything else after it. When you travel for Hajj, start from Mecca and then go to Madina afterwards."

Using the evidence from Oday ibn Thabit, Imam Ahmed remarks: "A group of the Prophet's (s) companions started from Madina and said: 'Didn't the Prophet (s) wear his Ihram here?"

Ibn Abi Shabih has a saying about the virtues of this act and has reported it using Alqamah and Aswa and Amr ibn Maymun's sayings. They started Hajj from Madina.

4– In *Sharh al-Meshkat*, the late great scholar Amini quoted from Sheikh Ali Lari:

"It is more suitable to leave the visitation until after Hajj is completed as this is what the religious legislative law of giving priority to the obligatory over the recommended requires."

Hasan has narrated a beautiful exposition from Abu Hanifah that says: "If Hajj is an obligatory act, it is better for the pilgrim to perform Hajj first and then visit the Prophet (s) later. It is permissible to start it with Hajj. If Hajj is a desireable one (i.e. not an obligatory one), then the piglrim has a choice between the two." He then says: "Apparently starting with Hajj is superior because of the application of the tradition and also the priority of the right of *Allāh* over the right of the Prophet (s). This is the reason for the priority of the mosque-greeting prayer over the visitation of his noble grave."

5– Bakri Dumyati wrote:

"The conclusion is that the visit of the Prophet's (s) grave is one of the best tools for attaining nearness to *Allāh*. Thus it is worthy for the pilgrim to have zeal for it and if possible avoid abandoning it especially after performing Hajj, as the nation of the Prophet (s) is in due debt to him and if any one from this nation salutes the Prophet (s) from afar using eye and head gestures and truly pays his debt, *Allāh* will fully award him."

6– Shookani wrote:

"The author (May *Allāh* bless his soul) has not mentioned the visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) in his book and the good place to mention it is in *Kitab al-Jana'ez*. However, as this visit mostly takes place during Hajj, a group of scholars has discussed it in *Kitab al-Hajj*. Therefore, in order to complete their point, we shall discuss it here. Some of the Malakites and Formalists have considered it as compulsory, while the Hanafites say that it is closer to being an obligation."

Ibn Taymiyyah Hanbali, the author's heir, famously known as Sheikh al-Islam, regards it as unlawful and some Hanbalites follow him in this regard. This issue has been narrated by Malik, Jawini and Qadi 'Iyad. Those who consider the visit as desirable have used the following verse as their argument:

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ وَلَوۡ أَنَّهُمۡ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمۡ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسۡتَغۡفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسۡتَغۡفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا ﴾

"We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allāh's leave. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allāh for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allāh all-clement, all-merciful." [1]

The justification for using this reasoning is that the Prophet (s) is alive in his grave as the tradition says: "Prophets are alive in their graves." Bayhaqi considers this tradition correct and has written a chapter on it. Master Abu Mansure Baghdadi says: "The researchers and theologians of our people have said: 'Truly, our Prophet is alive after his death.'"

Everything proven concering the martyrs being alive and receiving sustenance confirms this issue as well as the Prophet (s) being among the martyrs. Since it has being proven that the Prophet (s) is alive in his grave, then whoever comes to him after his death is like the one who visited him while he was alive. Yet it is mentioned in some narrations that Prophets do not remain in their graves for more than three days, or according to some other narration, forty days. Thus, if this narration is correct, it contradicts the previous justification. This also includes the saying on the continuous life of Prophets (a) in their graves, which will be mentioned later and also contradict the tradition that implies that when we send blessings on the Prophet (s) his soul returns. Yes, if the tradition: "Whoever visits me after my death is the same as the one who has visited me during my lifetime," is correct, then this can be used as proof which will be discussed soon.

The second reasoning on the desirablity of the visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) is the Qur'anic verse:

1. *Al-Nisa*, Chapter 4, verse 64.

﴿وَمَن يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ مُرَٰغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً ۚ وَمَن يَخْرُجْ مِنۢ بَيْتِهِۦ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ ٱلْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُۥ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا﴾

"Whoever migrates in the way of Allāh will find many havens and plenitude in the earth. And whoever leaves his home migrating toward Allāh and His Apostle, and is then overtaken by death, his reward shall certainly fall on Allāh, and Allāh is all-forgiving, all-merciful."[1]

And migration to the Prophet (s) while he is alive and after his death is undertaken to receive (the blessings of) his presence.

However, let it not remain concealed that access to the presence of the Prophet (s) while he was alive has some benefits that do not exist after his death. Among those benefits is looking at his noble essence and learning the rulings of religion from his presence and accompanying him in holy wars and other such benefits.

The third reason used is the tradition that considers visiting graves as generally permissible (whether it be the Prophet's (s) or others').

Ibn Khozaymah has quoted the same tradition in his *Sahih* through *Musa ibn Hilal Abdi* and has said: "If this tradition is correct then probably a shuffling has taken place in its evidence." *Bayhaqi* has also quoted this tradition. This narration has been quoted from *Ibn 'Umar* by Ibn Oday, Dar Qutni and Ibn Habban in the book *Tarjamah al-Neman* thus:

The Prophet (s) said: "Whoever performs Haj, but does not visit me has been disdainful towards me."

This narration is quoted from Abdullah ibn Masoud who quoted from Abu Fath Azdi in the following words: "The Prophet (s) said: Whoever performs Hajj and visits my grave and fights in a holy war and prays in Bayt al Maqdis, *Allāh* will not question him on his obligations." The same tradition quoted from Hateb, has been quoted

1. *Al-Nisa*, Chapter 4, verse 100.

from Abu Hurairah. This has been quoted from Ibn ‘Abbas to ‘Aqili and in Musnad al-Ferdous with the same chain of narrators. It has been quoted from him thus: The Prophet (s) said: “Whoever goes to Mecca for Hajj and then intends my visit in my mosque, two good Hajj pilgrimages will be recorded for him.”

It has been quoted from Ali ibn Abi Talib to Ibn ‘Asakir: “Whoever visits the grave of the Prophet (s) will attain his neighbourhood.” Abd al-Haq has said, “The visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) is among the obligatory customs.”

Those who consider the visitation permissible use the fact that it was a routine performed by different sects of Muslims travelling from various parts of the world for the purpose of Hajj. Such people had the intention of travelling to Madina to visit the Prophet (s) and considered it among the best deeds, and no one questioned this act and thus consensus exists in this regard.

It has been narrated that Atbi said: “I was sitting before the grave of the Prophet (s) when an Arab man came and said: ‘Peace be upon you Oh Messenger of Allāh! I have heard that Allāh (s.w.t) has said:

“...Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allāh for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allāh all-clement, all-merciful.”[1]

‘Now I have come to your presence to ask for forgiveness of my sins and I seek your intercession before *Allāh*.’ Then he recited this poem:

Oh the best of People, burried in the best land and field / Whose sweet fragrance has scented lands and moutains

May my life be sarificed for the grave which you are in / That has modesty, generosity and forgiveness

The Arab man then returned:

“When I fell asleep, I saw the Prophet (s) in a dream telling me: ‘Oh Atbi! Go to the Arab man and give him the good news of *Allāh*’s forgivness.’”

1. *Al-Nisa*, Chapter 4, verse 64.

11– Qazi Hussain said: "It is customary that when the pilgrim becomes free of Hajj, he comes to Madina and visits the grave of the Prophet (s)."

12– Qazi Abu Tayeb said: "It is recommended that after performing Hajj or Umratu tamatu the pilgrim visits the grave of the Prophet (s)."

13– Muhamelli has said in *Tajreed*: "It is recommended that the pilgrim visits the grave of the Prophet (s) once he is free of the pilgrimage in Mecca."

2– The recommendation of the visit for non-pilgrims and the performers of Umratu tamatu from the Sunni point of view.

As said before, by referring to the books by Sunni scholars it is possible to see that not only do they consider the visit of the holy Prophet (s) permissible but rather a recommendation. This recommendation is not exclusive to pilgrims after the Hajj, but includes non-pilgrims and Umratu Tamatu pilgrims in such a way that if someone only packs for the journey to visit the shrine of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*, he has performed a good and desirable act. We shall now discuss the views of some scholars in this regard.

1– Musa Hijawi wrote:

Entering the Ka'bah, praying there, drinking the ZamZam water, and visiting the grave of the Prophet (s), are customs even if the visitor is not a Hajj or Umratu tamatu pilgrim. It is also customary that the person going to Madina visits the grave of the Prophet (s) to send excessive salutaion and blessings upon him.

2– Bakri Dumyati wrote:

Bilal did not recite Adhan for anyone after the Prophet (s) except once for *'Umar*, when he entered Syria, and made people cry bitterly with his voice. Some have said: Bilal said the Adhan for *'Umar* in Syria, and others have said that Bilal was in Syria when he saw the Prophet (s) in a dream telling him to visit him. He quickly packed and got himself to the grave of the Prophet (s) and rubbed his face on it crying. *Imam Hasan* and *Imam Ḥusayn* were very eager to hear him recite the Adhan in the place he used to (i.e., on top of the mosque), so he said the *Adhan* that brought tears to everyone's eyes. After the

demise of the Prophet (s) such a day in which men and women cried bitterly had not been seen until that day.

3– Zakaria Ansari wrote:

And the visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) is among the desirable acts even if the visitor is not a Hajj or Umratu tamatu pilgrim. However, it appears from the words of the author that this desirablity is for the Hajj or Umratu tamatu piglrim. The reason for not making this exclusive is the tradition in which the Prophet (s) said: 'Do not pack for a journey (to mosques) unless it is to three mosques: Masjid al-Haram, Masjid al-Aqsa and my mosque.'

The two Sheikhs (*Abū Bakr* and *'Umar*) have narrated this and it is a custom that the person who is going to Madina visits the grave of the Prophet (s) to send endless salutations and blessings upon him while on the way.

In the section on the views and sayings of the scholars regarding the visit of the Prophet (s), it is quoted from Milbari Hendi that he regarded the visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) as a recommendation emphasized upon, even if the visitor in not a Hajj or Umratu tamatu pilgrim.

The permission of visting the graves of the faithful

The permission to visit the graves of the faithful from the Sunni point of view

In this chapter, we shall present proof of the permission to visit the graves of the faithful in three parts so to make the stance of the Sunnis clear.

First: The sayings of Sunni scholars

There are many cases in the jurisprudence books of Sunni scholars in which they not only consider visiting the graves of the faithful as lawful, but, rather, as a recommended deed. Here we shall mention some of the sayings of the Sunni scholars:

1– Shafe'i wrote:

'And there is no problem in visiting graves.'

Malik has quoted a tradition from Rabiatu ibn Abi Abd Ar Rahman received from Abu Sa'id Khodri in which the Prophet (s) said: *I used to forbid you from visiting the graves in the past. But now visit them.*

2– Mohammad ibn Sharbini wrote:

'And it is a desirable custom that the visitor also goes to other noble places in Madina, which are about thirty known locations. Visiting *Baqi'* and *Quba* is also recommended.'

He also says:

'Concordingly, visiting the graves of Muslims is recommended for men. In the past, visiting the graves was forbidden and it was later abrogated because of the saying of the Prophet (s): *I used to forbid you from visiting graves in the past, but now visit them.'*

Based on the choice of the author, women are not included in the Arabic male prefix. The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) always used to go to

Baqi' and say: *Peace be upon you, Oh land of the faithful. God willing we will join you. Oh Allāh! Forgive the people of Baqi'.*

There is a narration in which the Prophet (S) said: *Visit the graves as they remind you of death!* And truly the Prophet (s) used to forbid people from this in the beginning because of the closed minds of the ignorant persons.. Once the bases of Islam were established, he ordered them to visit the graves.

3– Mohammad ibn Nawawi wrote:

And visiting graves is recommended for men because of the narration in which Abu Hurairah said: "The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) visited the grave of his mother and cried, which made people around him cry as well. He then said: 'I asked *Allāh* if I could ask forgiveness for my mother, but *Allāh* did not give the permission. However I asked to visit her (grave) and *Allāh* gave the permission. Thus visit graves as they remind of death.'"

4– Ibn Abedin wrote:

"The author said: 'The visit to the graves of the faithful is without any problems and highly emphasised. As quoted from *Mujtaba ibn al-Bahr*, to use the term *highly emphasised* instead of *recommended* was better, because in the mentioned tradition this visit is commanded."

As said in Al-Imdad: Visit graves every week. The same is said in *Mukhtarat al-Nawazei*. It is said in *Sharh Lebab al-Minasek* that: Friday, Saturday and Monday and Thursday are superior (for this purpose).

5– Abū Bakr Kashani:

He has said in *Kitab Badee*:

"And visiting graves and praying for the dead faithful, without stepping on the graves, is allowed, because of the saying of the Prophet (s): 'I prohibited you from visiting graves in the past, now visit them as they remind you of the next world.'" The other reason is the practice of this act by the Muslim nation from the time of the Prophet (s) until today.

And in another place he says:

Sad Ibn Abi Waqas asked the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*: 'Oh Messenger of *Allāh*! My mother loved giving charity. Can I give charity on her behalf?' The Prophet (s) said: 'Give charity.' This has been practiced by Muslims since the time of the Prophet (s) until today. This includes visiting graves, reading the Qur'an over the graves, giving charity, fasting, praying, and passing the reward for these acts to the dead.

There are no intellectul barriers facing this as passing the reward is a form of kindness from *Allāh* and it is not because the servant is worthy of it. Thus *Allāh*can reward the person who sacrifices himself for the sake of *Allāh*just as He can reward someone only because of his kindness.

6– Ibn Najim Mesri wrote:

And he has clarified in *Mujtaba* that the visit to the graves is recommended. Some have said it is unlawful for women but the more correct saying is that the permissibility is proven for both.

7– Bohouti wrote:

"And if, after performing the religious rituals and visiting *Baqi'* and those buried inside it, including the companions, the generation after the companions, the scholars and the saints, the person wants to return to his homeland, he should return to the *Nabawi* mosque and perform two rakahs of prayer there and go towards the grave of the Prophet (s) and bid farewell and repeat the supplication. He said this in *Kitab Almostoujab* and added: 'And if he decides not to perform those acts, *Allāh*will not be happy (with him) after his finishing Hajj.'"

8– Ibn Hazem wrote:

And we regard the visit to the graves recommended. It is permissible and even obligatory. Men and women are equal in this issue because of the Muslim narration quoted from *Abū Bakr ibn Abi Shabih* who quoted it from Mohammad ibn Fadhil who quoted from Abu Sanan (Dhararah ibn Marrah) who quoted from Mahareb ibn Datharr who quoted from In Basidah who quoted from his father that the holy Prophet (s) said: 'I prohibited you from visiting the graves in the past, now visit them.'

Truly the visit to the graves has been quoted from the mother of the faithful (*'Āishah*) and *Ibn 'Umar* and others.

9– In Ahkam al-Jana'ez, Albani wrote:

And visiting graves has been legitimized because it teaches and reminds of death under the condition that one does not cause the anger of *Allah (swt)*by seeking refuge with the grave and reciting supplications without considering *Allāh*, or believing that ones sins have been wiped away and that one is truly deserving of paradise, etc. There are several traditions in this regard:

Baridat ibn Hasib said: The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: I prohibited you from visiting the graves in the past, now visit them [because they remind you of the next world] and [visiting them will increase your good deeds]. Thus everyone can visit them, but do not speak in vain [during the visit]. This narration has been quoted by Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Bayhaqi, Nesaee and Ahmad. The first and second pieces in the bracket have been quoted by Ahmad. Shabih has quoted the first piece in the bracket and the second and the third piece have been quoted by Nesaee.

In al-Majmu', Nawawi says: 'What is meant by Hajr when he says speaking in vain? The primary prohibtion to visit graves was due to the proximity of the time to the period of ignorance and the likelihood of the vain speech of the period of ignorance being revived. However when the basis of Islam became strong, the grounds for putting these rules into effect were prepared and the signs became popular. The visiting of graves became permissible, and in order to be cautious in the visit, the Prophet (s) said: 'Do not speak in vain when visiting the graves of Muslims.' I say: 'And what the common people and others did during visits did not remain hidden. These acts were asking the dead for something and seeking refuge with them, asking them to intercede for them and ask *Allāh*for their needs. These are all frivolities. It is the scholar's duty to announce the ruling of *Allāh* in this regard for the person (commiting such acts) and teach him the proper manner of such a visit and its aim.'

In the book, *Sobol Assalam*, following the traditions of visits and the wisdom behind them, Sanani says: 'All these traditions imply the legality of visiting and mention the wisdom behind them as well as

the fact that this visit is for learning. Thus, if a visit does not carry these benefits, it is then not legally approved (and not permitted).'

Abu Sa'id Khodri said: The messenger of *Allāh (s)* said: "I used to prohibit you from visiting graves in the past, now visit them because there are lessons to be learnt in this visit [and do not utter words that may cause *Allāh's* anger."

This narration has been quoted by Ahmad, Hakem and Bayhaqi. Bayhaqi has said: Based on the condition of Muslim, this narration is correct. Zahabi approved Bayhaqi and said: The issue is just how these two (Bayhaqi and Muslim) have quoted it. Bazar has quoted this narration with an extra piece. Just as the book Majma al-Heythani has mentioned, the narrators in the chain of this narration are trustworthy men.

I say: A narration similar to this but through another route and different chain of narrators has been quoted to Ahmad and the chain of narrators has no problem in its text related appendage. The proof of this narration is the tradition of Abdullah ibn *'Umar*. Bazar, *Ṭabrānī* has also quoted this tradition in *Al-Mujam al-Sagheer* from trust worthy narrators.

Anas ibn Malik said: The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: "I prohibited you from visiting the graves in the past, now visit them as this visit softens your heart and causes it to cry and brings tears to the eye and reminds you of the next world. But do not speak in vain during your visit."

Hakem has quoted this in Mustadrak using the chain of narrators of Hasan. Then, he and Ahmad Shabih have quoted this narration using different chains of narrators and through another route. This evidence is however weak, as mentioned in Albab from Abu Hurairah.

10– Samhudi wrote:

Ghazali said: 'If visiting one during his life is blessed, his visit after his death is also blessed. Travelling for his visit is also permitted.'

Sometimes visiting (the graves) is to pay a debt to the dead. It is narrated from the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) that: "The most favourite state of the dead in his grave is when his friend in the world comes to visit his grave."

I saw in Aqshahri's writings: Bawi ibn Mukhalid quoted in a Marfooan tradition using his chain of narrators which goes until Mohmmad ibn Noaman from his father: "Whoever visits the grave of his parents on a Friday, or visits the grave of one of them, his name will be written among the good doers even if he has been cursed by his parents before their death."

In another place he writes:

The scholars have reached a consensus on visiting the graves by men. This consensus has been quoted by Nawawi and, some formalist scholars consider visiting graves obligatory. There are disagreements in the case of women. However based on certain reasons, the noble grave of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) is special and thus Subki said: 'There is no difference between men and women in visiting the grave of the Prophet (s).'

Jamal Reymi has said in al-Taqfiah that: 'The grave of the Prophet (s) and his two friends (*Abū Bakr* and *'Umar*) are exceptions to the disagreement of scholars on visiting the graves as, without doubt, visiting these graves is also recommended for women.'

This case has been mentioned by some of the later scholars, including Adamanhouri Kabir, with the graves of saints, the pious ones and martyrs being added. He has also mentioned the desirability of visiting graves by women.

Thus, by mentioning the Prophet (s) visiting the Ohud martyrs and the people of Baqi', visiting the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) is also proven as desirable. If visiting the grave of others is recommended, visiting the Prophet's (s) grave has priority over others and becomes recommended. Sometimes a visit is performed to pray for the dead, just as proven by his (s) visit for the people of *Baqi'*, and sometimes to seek blessings from their graves if they were righteous people.

He then says: Abu Mohammad Ashar Mesahi Maliki has said: Seeking benefits from the dead is dubious unless it is the visit of the grave of the Prophet (s) and the other Messengers (may the peace and blessings of *Allāh*be upon all of them.)

11– It has been quoted from Ibn Arabi:

Truly, visiting the grave of the Prophet (s), companions and the generation after the companions, and the scholars and the other Messengers, for the sake of blessings has been narrated in a famous tradition.

12– The great scholar Amini says:

Muhib Addin *Ṭabrānī* has quoted a long tradition in the book *Riadh Ana Adhara* about the incident that took place between *'Umar ibn Khatab* and an old man who was heading for help from *'Umar*. The incident is as follows:

When *'Umar* returned from Hajj and reached this place and asked about the old man, he found the old man dead. The narrator says: I saw *'Umar* running to the grave of the old man taking long steps until he stood on top of his grave and sent blessings on him. He then embraced the grave and cried." After quoting the above mentioned story from Muhib *Ṭabarī*, the late *Amini* says:

Thus, if it is permissible for someone like *'Umar* to stand on top of the grave of a normal person and embrace it and cry over it, how can you prevent the nation from standing before the grave of Messenger of *Allāh* (s) and embrace it and cry for him and his pure family when *Allāh*says: "They are those people who have been guided by *Allāh*and thus their guidance must be followed?"

13– The great scholar Amini says:

In *Kitab al-Furqan*, Sheikh Salamah Shafe'i has quoted the saying of Ibn Taymiyyah that says: 'Whoever cirucumbulates or touches the grave of the pious servants of *Allāh*, he has commited the gravest of sins." Ibn Taymiyyah has various similar statements. He considers this act in one place a major sin and in another place polythesim. This is similar to other issues, when centuries before him researchers and jurists have finished these discussions and written literature on it. In spite of this, he has opposed the view of all of them and has probably claimed that there was a consensus amongst the scholars regarding his claim, whereas the consensus was against him. The truth will become apparent to whoever focuses on his words, and the sayings of the scholars before and after him.

As an example, one should know that touching the grave and circumambulating it is what the common people do. Scholars have three different views on this.

They either say it is absolutely permissible or absoulutly forbidden but not unlawful, yet exremely undesirable. This undesirablity does not include the person who has lots of affection towards the one being visited, otherwise, manners require avoiding the touching of graves and circumambulating them.

The acts that some Muslims deny and consider the performing of which as worship of other than *Allah (swt)*, offer reasoning based on two premises, the major of which you will give affirmation to. The major premise is: Any worship for others than *Allāh* is polytheism. The minor premise; the saying of Ibn Taymiyyah, that any form of calling upon the dead person or circumambulating the grave or touching it or any sacrifice and vow making for the grave owner is worship of other than *Allāh*. He then uses Qur'anic verses and *Sahih* traditions, the implications of which he has either not understood or has purposely interpreted incorrectly. He then most falsely concludes from the analogy, that all Muslims except him and his followers must be regarded as pagans.

The great researcher and crown of the people of precision, Imam Abu Abdullah Mohammad ibn Abd al-Majid Fasi (death 1229 A.H), has put together a beautiful summarized research about this sect and its analogies in one of his works. Using logical and principle reasoning, he has belittled and weakend the basis of this sect.

After stating the scientific rank of this so called Imam (Ibn Taymiyyah) he says: This man has transgressed and violated the religion by saying: Travelling to visit the Prophet (s) is a sin, and whoever seeks help from him after his demise, has become a pagan. Yet, in one place he calls this polythesim. Here, it does not make a difference if the heart of the one seeking help is completely filled with the belief that there is no Creator other than *Allāh*, and that his seeking help from the Prophet (s) is because *Allāh*has placed him as the source of goodness and the one whose intercession is accepted and the one whose prayer is granted, as the majority of Muslims believe.

In a tradition Jamal Adin Abdullah ibn Mohammad Ansari Muhadeth says: 'We had travelled to Damascus with our master Sheikh Taj uddin Fakhari to go and see the shoes (*Na'lein*) of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*. I accompanied him while he went to Dar al-Hadith A Sharifiah in Damascus. When he saw the shoes of the Prophet (s), he took off his headscarf and started to kiss the shoes and place them over his face while tears flowed down his cheeks. He read the following:

If the lover was asked if he wanted the beloved and her promise and the world with it

He would say he wants the dust on her shoes, as that is more desirable and more healing.

Second: Traditions recommending visiting the graves of the faithful

From the traditions quoted from the Prophet (s), it is clear that visiting the graves of the faithful, seeking blessings and forgiveness for them is desirable and has been encouraged. Before mentioning these traditions, we shall briefly discuss the verse that descended forbidding seeking blessings or praying for them.

1– The verse that forbids standing before the graves of the hypocritees, sending salutations and seeking blessings for them implies that standing before the graves of the faithful is permissible, and was a norm amongst the faithful, and the Messenger of *Allah* (s). Had there been no previous record of them performing this act, the forbidding of it for the hypocritees would make no sense. This very verse about the hypocritees is in *Surah Taubah* and is as follows:

﴿وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰٓ أَحَدٍ مِّنۡهُم مَّاتَ أَبَدٗا وَلَا تَقُمۡ عَلَىٰ قَبۡرِهِۦٓۖ إِنَّهُمۡ كَفَرُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَمَاتُواْ وَهُمۡ فَٰسِقُونَ﴾

"And never pray over any of them when he dies, nor stand at his graveside. They indeed defied Allāh and His Apostle and died as transgressors" [1]

It is clear that the purpose of saying "stand at his graveside" is not only plain standing, e.g. someone pausing over the grave of a hypocrite to look at the stone or its geometry or for other purposes like standing and talking to a friend or other reasons. The purpose of the verse is rather standing to pay respect and to seek blessings and forgiveness for the grave owner, which is forbidden. On the contrary, seeking forgiveness and blessings for the faithful is permissible and worthy.

Now we shall see whether it is pointing to standing by and pausing at the grave during the burial or does it point to the Messenger of *Allah* (s) prohibiting standing over their graves at anytime.

Qurtabi is of the first opinion. He says in his exegisis:

"It was a custom of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) to stand on the grave of the dead during burial and pray for him."

Al-Manār regards this verse as specific to the time of burial of the hypocrite. He says: Some have included visiting the grave in the exegesis of this verse. But this is not what the verse shows. There are various traditions about visiting graves that use the term "visit" and not "standing by the grave."

However, a group of Sunni commentators have considered this an absolute command, general to all states. They have said:

"Do not pause and stop at the grave of the hypocrite for burial or praying or visiting."

An example of this is the exegisis of Ibn Kathir, in which he says:

1. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 84.

"And you must not stand over the grave of the hypocrite and seek blessings or forgiveness for him, nor should you pray for him. This is a general ruling for any one who has become known as a hypocrite".

It is said in the Beydhawi exegisis:

"Do not pause over the grave of a hypocrite for his burial, or to visit him."

Alusi says:

"It is unclear whether "standing by the grave" is meant pausing over it during burial or an hour later.The meaning that occurs to one is more general than this. It is not exclusive to the burial but includes all states."

It is said in Tafsir al-Munir:

"And do not stand over the grave of the hypocrite during his burial; visit him, pray for him or seek forgiveness for him."

The majority of the commentators have said these are not exclusive to the burial and are rather general. The neccessity of implication requires generality and there is no context to limit this to the burial state. What this defines is that standing over the grave of those who had faith and were not hypocrites, asking for blessing and forgiveness for them is permissible and a worthy act. This is also how the majority of the commentators have interpreted this verse."

It is also said in *Sefwatu Tafsir* (one of the latest Sunni exegisis books):

"Do not pause or stand by the grave of the hypocrite for his burial or visit and pray."

The most important definition of the hypocrite has been described in the following verse:

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَمَاتُواْ وَهُمْ فَٰسِقُونَ﴾

"... They indeed defied Allāh and His Apostle and died as transgressors" [1]

1. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 84.

The reason the impermissibility of standing by their graves is their infidelity to *Allāh* and His messenger (s). They died while they were perverted transgressors. The requirement of this analysis is not to include the faithful in these two rulings.

It is said in *Majma al-Bayan*:

"This verse implies that pausing and standing over the grave to pray (for the dead) is a lawful worship and if it was not so, *Allāh* would not have made prohibition of it exclusive to the pagans."

It is said in the exegisis of Ibn Kathir:

"After *Allāh* prohibited praying for the hypocrite and standing over his grave to seek forgiveness for him, this act (became) one of the major tools for nearness to *Allāh* (a recommended act which helps nearness to *Allāh*) for the faithful and thus is permissible and lawful. Performing this act for the believers has great reward."

The great scholar Tabatabaei said:

"This verse refers to (the act of the Prophet -s-) in which he used to pray for the dead Muslims while standing by their graves for prayer."

All commentators (Sunni Shia included) have used this part of the verse:

﴿وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰٓ أَحَدٍ مِّنۡهُم مَّاتَ أَبَدٗا وَلَا تَقُمۡ عَلَىٰ قَبۡرِهِۦٓۖ إِنَّهُمۡ كَفَرُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَمَاتُواْ وَهُمۡ فَٰسِقُونَ﴾

"And never pray over any of them when he dies, nor stand at his graveside. They indeed defied Allāh and His Apostle and died as transgressors" [1]

as the reason for the prohibition.This analysis means that because they are pagans in reality, one must not perform these two acts. Whenever there is a cause, the ruling is verified. The specificity makes the ruling exculsive to the cause and boundaries of its application. For example if it is said: Do not drink alcoholic beverages because they cause intoxication, this reasoning will imply

1. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 84.

illegality of all drinks that cause intoxication even though they may not be alcoholic. Thus the reason for these two rulings is the hidden paganism in the hypocrites and includes all pagans, and on the other hand, this ruling is specific to those who do not believe in *Allāh* and his Messenger (s). There is no such ruling for the faithful.

Permission to visit graves

Abū Bakr Ibn Abi Shabih quotes from Abu Hurairah:

"The Prophet (s) visited his mothers grave and cried which made those around him cry. He then said: 'I sought Allah's *(swt)* permission to seek forgiveness for my mother, but He did not grant me permission. I then asked permission to visit my mother's grave, He gave me the permission to visit my mother's grave. So visit graves as they remind you of death.'"

This tradition has been quoted through two routes with slight differences in *Sahih Muslim* and in the footnotes of *Sharh Nawawi*, in which he says: "Without doubt, this is a correct tradition."

The tradition includes two issues: one is the permission of *Allāh* to the Prophet (s) to visit his mother's (grave), and his ordering the people to visit graves. The other issue is the Prophet (s) asking *Allah's (swt)* permission to seek forgiveness for his mother and him being denied the permission.

Based on Shia principles and beliefs this is incorrect. According to Shia belief, all the ancestors of the Prophet (s) were monotheists and followers of Prophet Ibrahim (s). As it is said in Ziyarat e Wareth:

"We bear witness that you are a light in the pure and great loins and wombs."

However, as claimed by Sunnis and narrators of this tradition, the mother of the Prophet (s) was a pagan and passed away before the Beethah, during the childhood of the Prophet (s). They also regard the father of the Prophet (s) to be pagan who passed away before his birth. However, according to the Shia school of thought all the ancestors of the Prophet (s) were monotheists and this part of the tradition is not in accordance with our beliefs. This tradition, however, commands visiting graves and implies its recommendation.

Some Sunni people have used the Prophet's (s) visit to his mother's grave as proof of her monothesim. Among them is Alusi who says:

"It is said in the tradition that the Prophet (s) asked for *Allāh's* permission to visit his mother's grave and *Allāh* gave him this permission. I think this permission by *Allāh* implies that she was among the monotheists and not the pagans. This is also what I have decided upon. It's reasoning is that *Allāh* prohibited the Prophet (s) from standing by the graves of pagans and He gave him the permission to stand next to his mother's grave. Thus this permission indicates that his mother was not among the polytheists and pagans, otherwise *Allāh* would have never given him this permission."

He then says:

"Apparently, the Prophet (s) had some doubt regarding this issue, so he asked for *Allāh's* permission and *Allāh*gave him the permission and sent down revelation on its truth. Therefore, no one can criticise its permissibility and say that it is in contradiction with this issue giving the reason that if she was a monotheist, there was no need for the Propet (s) to ask for permission. The answer to this is that apparently the Prophet (s) was hesitant about thesim of the person in the period of ignorance and thus asked for permission from *Allāh.* Some other Sunnis have said the parents of the Prophet (s) were not present during the invitiation to Islam, as they passed away before the Beethah of the Prophet (s) and the invitiation to Islam. Thus they will not be punished, as punishement is a consequence of the rejection of an invitation from *Allah (swt)*:

﴿مَّنِ ٱهۡتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهۡتَدِي لِنَفۡسِهِۦۖ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيۡهَاۚ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٞ وِزۡرَ أُخۡرَىٰۗ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبۡعَثَ رَسُولٗا﴾

"Whoever is guided is guided only for [the good of] his own soul, and whoever goes astray, goes astray only to its detriment. No bearer shall bear another's burden. We do not punish [any community] until We have sent [it] an apostle" [1]

1. *Surah al-Isra'*, Chapter 17, verse 15.

Therefore the reason for not receiving permission to ask for forgivness was that there was no need to ask for forgiveness for someone to whom the invitation had not reached and he had died before it. This kind of forgiveness has not been legalised and that person is saved and does not need one to seek forgiveness for him.

Some other Sunnis say, *Allāh* brought them back to life after the Beethah of the Prophet (s) and they accepted the invitation to Islam. Some others have also said: '*Allāh* will test them on the Day of Judgment and make them succeed in good.'

The previously mentioned explanations and interpretations apart from being faulty are in contradiction with Shia doctrine that says: "The parents of the Prophet (s) and the pure Imams and their ancestors were pure even when they were in their father's loins or mother's womb." The place of this discussion is out of the scope of this book, and texts of theology should be referred to for more information.

There are disagreements in Sunni books on this issue. For example Abu Hanifah has said in his *Fiqh al-Akbar* that the parents of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) were pagans and died while they were polythesists. However, Suyuti has written a separate treatise on this case.

In Musnad, Abu Hanifah quotes from Alqamah, who quoted from Solaiman ibn Baridah, who quoted from his father that the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said:

"We prohibited you from visiting graves in the past. *Allāh* has then given Mohammad (s) the permission to visit the grave of his mother. So visit graves but do not say unworthy words."

This is how Tirmidhi has quoted this tradition from Solaiman ibn Baridah who quoted from his father:

"I prohibited you from visiting graves, the permission was then given to Mohamamd (s) to visit the grave of his mother. Thus, visit graves, as visiting graves reminds you of the next world."

He then says:

"There are narrations in this chapter from Abi Sa'id, Ibn Da'ud, Anas, Abu Hurairah and Om Salamah. Abu Eisa has said: The tradition by

Baridah is right and correct and the people of knowledge follow it and do not see any problem in visiting graves. This is also the saying of Ibn Mobarak, Shafe'i, Ahmad and Ishaq.

Abu Davoud, Muslim, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Abdullah ibn Masoud quote the same tradition with slight differences.

Third: The charateristics of visiting graves

There are numerous narrations quoted from the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) regarding the way to visit the graves of the faithful, that all imply the recommendation of visiting and sending salutations upon the dead. We shall mention some of them:

Bayhaqi has quoted in Sunan with evidence from *'Āishah*:

"On the night of *'Āishah* with the Prophet (s), he would leave for Baqi' at midnight and [upon reaching there] say: 'Peace be upon you, Oh abode of the group of faithful! You received what you were promised and God willing we will join you! Oh *Allāh,* forgive the people of *Baqi'*!'"

He quotes the same tradition with different evidence and says Muslim has also quoted this in his *Sahih.*

In the Sahih, Muslim has quoted a different story about the going of the Prophet (s) to *Baqi'* at the end of the night he was with *'Āishah,* using the evidence of Mohammad ibn Qais and *'Āishah,* which is apparently different from what was quoted previously. This is because in this quoted story, *'Āishah* follows the Prophet(s) to *Baqi'*:

"When the Prophet reached *Baqi'*, he paused for a long time. Then he raised his hand three times and returned. *'Āishah* returned before the Prophet (s). Some words are exchanged between the Prophet (s) and *'Āishah* and the Prophet (s) said: 'Jebrail (Gabriel) told me: "Truly your Lord is ordering you to come to Baqi' and ask for forgiveness for them.' And I followed *Allāh's* order."

'Āishah says: I said: "Oh messenger of *Allāh*! And what do I say to them?" The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) told *'Āishah* to repeat his words: 'Peace be upon you, Oh people of the graves, the faithful and the Muslims. May God have mercy on our ancestors and those after us. Truly if *Allāh* wants, we shall join you.'"

Solaiman ibn Baridah, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi, and Nesaee have all quoted this tradition with none or slight differences.

Permission to visit graves for women

There are disagreements among the Sunni scholars on women visiting graves.

There are five opinions in this matter:

- It is unlawful.
- It is an undesireable act (*makruh*). This is the opinion of the majority.
- It is forbidden for young, not old women.
- It is permissible.
- It is recommended.

However, all consider visiting the Prophet's (s) grave and those of the pious as exceptions. Now we shall analyse the reasoning behind these opinions.

It is unlawful

The argument used for this opinion is the tradition Ibn Majeh has quoted in his *Sunan* from Hasan ibn Thabit, Abu Hurairah and Ibn 'Abbas.

"The messenger of *Allāh* (s) has cursed those women who visit graves a lot."

Abu Da'ud has quoted this tradition in *Sunan* only from Ibn 'Abbas.

Tirmidhi has quoted this tradition in *Sunan* from Abu Hurairah.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal has quoted this tradition several times in different chapters of his *Musnad* from Abu Hurairah and Hasan ibn Thabit.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal has quoted this tradition several times in different chapters of his *Musnad* from Ibn 'Abbas in the following way.

"The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) has cursed those women who visit graves a lot and those who build mosques over graves and set lights in them."

There are various responses to this tradition in Sunni books some of which we shall point out.

The first response

The majority of scholars say that it implies undesirablility rather than impermissibility. We shall mention some of their sayings.

1– Tirmidhi, in a chapter titled; "On the undesirability of women visiting graves" mentions the above narration which does not imply anything more than undesirability.

Abu Eisa Tirmidhi then says:

"Some scholars have said the reason for the undesirability of visiting graves by women is because of their low capacity of patience and their excessive grief."

2– There are some sayings in this regard from Bakri Dumyati, a summary of which will be mentioned here.

"And visiting graves is recommended for men and not women…"

He then uses two traditions as arguments until he reaches the point where he concludes that what is percieved from the valid tradition is undesirablity.

He then says: "Yes, the exception to this is visiting the grave of the Prophet (s) as it is one of the most powerful tools of nearness to *Allāh* for men and women. And visiting graves of scholars and saints has the same ruling as visiting the grave of the Prophet (s)."

The second response

The perception from this prohibition is that women visiting graves may commit a major sin or perform an unlawful act while there.

In *Kishaf al-Qena*, Bohouti, one of the Hanbalite scholars has said:

"Visiting the graves of Muslims is recommended for men. And visiting graves is undesirable for women because of the narration by Om Attiah who said: "We, women, have been prohibited from

visiting graves. However a consensus was not reached on it. While on the visit, if an unlawful act is committed by a woman, visiting graves will become unlawful for her."

This narration has been narrated by the five traditionists besides Nesaee and Tirmidhi, who consider it as valid to visit the graves of those other than the Prophet (s) and his two companions, *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar* (May God be pleased with them). What is pecieved from the tradition does not constitute the cases where women commit unlawful acts.

Mohammad ibn Sharbini says:

"And some said it is unlawful because of the tradition Ibn Majeh and Tirmidhi have quoted from Abu Hurairah. And this unlawfulness is not present in the Rowzah, so this is what the author of *Muhazeb* and others believe."

Some others have considered it permissible. The author of *Kitab al-Ehyah* also believes this and Ro'yani has also considered it valid. The justification for this ruling is the principle of exemption and valid tradition. However, this disagreement is in the case of visiting graves of the faithful, but there are no disputes on the visit to the grave of the Prophet (s) among the scholars.

Damanhouri, has aligned the visit to the graves of other Prophets (a), pious ones, and martyrs to the visit of the Prophet's (s) grave, and has also considered their visit as one of the major tools for nearness to *Allāh* and apparently this saying of Damanhouri is correct.

The third response

Some others perceive that it points to the visiting of the graves of pagans. Sarakhsi says:

"Some have said that this prohibition refers to the visiting of the graves of pagans. The pagans were never prohibited from visiting the graves of Muslims. The Prophet (s) said: "*Allāh* gave Mohammad the permission to visit the grave of his mother who died while she was a pagan (but others have not been given this permission)."

The fourth response

This prohibition is for those women who visit graves in excess, because *Zawarat* is an Arabic form of emphasis which implies excessiveness and it does not include the visit that is not excessive.

Shookani quotes from Qurtabi that he said that the reason for this prohibition is when the women give up their embellishment and visit graves excessively, it harms the rights of their husbands. Besides this, wailing loudly and crying also leads to a loss of rights of the menfolk. Some have said that if a woman refrains from such conduct then there is no problem in it as men and women need a reminder of death.

The fifth response

This prohibition has been abrogated. Abu Eisa Tirmidhi says: This prohibition was before the Prophet (s) gave the permission to visit graves. However, after this, both men and women were given this permission. Therefore this prohibition was abrogated and the permission to visit graves was given by the Prophet (s).

Abudullah Abi Malikah said: One day, *'Āishah* was returning from the graveyard. I asked her: "Oh mother of the faithful, where are you returning from?" She said: "From the grave of my brother, Abd A Rahman." I then said: "Hasn't the Messenger of *Allāh* prohibited visiting graves?" She replied: "Yes, the Prophet (s) did prohibit it, but later he ordered us to visit them."

Shookani says:

"Hakem has quoted this tradition and Ibn Majeh has also quoted a summary of this from *'Āishah* in which the Prophet (s) has given permission to visit graves.

Abi Makiah also quoted the above from *'Āishah.*

And the traditions about visiting graves were abrogated. The abrogated tradition is the one quoted from Alqamah ibn Marthad who quoted from Solaiman ibn Baridah who quoted from his father who said the Prophet (s) said: "In the past, I prohibited you from visiting graves, now visit them. And *Allāh* Almighty gave the Prophet (s) the permission to visit the grave of his mother. This tradition is

mentioned in Sahih by *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar* (May God be pleased with both of them.)

The sixth response

There are various traditions that clearly give permission to women to visit graves.

Permission to visit graves and its reason

Before we engage in the arguments of visiting graves by women, we shall put forward and answer the problems the Sunni scholars have put forward regarding visiting graves by women and then discuss the reason for its permissibility.

Nawawi, the commentator of *Sahih Muslim*, says the following: There are differences in opinion among the scholars on this issue. The tradition: "I prohibited you from visiting graves in the past, now visit them," is used as proof for its permissibility. The explanation is that in Arabic, the word I prohibited you (*Nahyokum)*, male prefix is used and men are the addressees. Thus according to the adopted doctrines in *Sahih*, women are not included.

In the response to this criticism, it must be said that:

Firstly: the general narrations that imply permission of visit for men and women are not exclusive to these kinds of narrations that contain an addressee such as *Zoora* (men visitors). Some narrations are general and do not point to an addressee. An example is the tradition quoted from Malik ibn Anas in which he says:

"The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: I prohibited you from visiting graves, now whoever wants to visit a grave, must do so as it causes tender heartedness and tears and reminds one of the next world."

In this narration, the Arabic word "*Man*" is a conjunction. It means whoever wants to, and denotes the general public and includes men and women equally as in the verse:

﴿وَمَن شَآءَ فَلۡيَكۡفُرۡ﴾

"...and let anyone who wishes disbelieve it..." [1]

The above mentioned tradition is not addressing anyone (in specific) so it can be said that it is pointing to men.

Nesaee mentions a tradition similar to this and his interpretation is as follows:

"I prohibited you from visiting graves, now whoever desires can visit them but do not utter vain words during the visit."

This also includes men and women and is not exclusive to a certain group. It also implies the fact that the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) has given permission to everyone to visit graves. Therefore, the generalities and applications in the Arabic term *"Fa Zooro al-Qoboor"* -"So visit the graves," is not exclusive to men.

Secondly: even though the Qur'an uses the male prefix to address its audience, it is not exclusive to men or male tribes. For example:

﴿فَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ﴾

"...So maintain the prayer, give the zakat..." [2]

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ﴾

"...O you who have faith!..." [3]

﴿وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ﴾

"...and be wary of Allāh..." [4]

1. *Surah al-Kahf*, Chapter 18, verse 29.
2. *Surah al-Hajj*, Chapter 22, verse 78.
3. *Surah Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 104.
4. *Surah Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 189.

﴿إِن تَجۡتَنِبُواْ كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنۡهَوۡنَ عَنۡهُ﴾

"...If you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden..." [1]

﴿وَٱجۡتَنِبُواْ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَ﴾

"...and keep away from the Rebels..." [2]

and others as such, about which no linguist argues that these are exclusive to men.If we make such a claim, then the majority of the rulings and orders including the obligatory and the prohibited, morals, political and social rulings must be exclusive to men as the male prefix has been used in most cases whereas the female (plural) prefix is used rarely. Thus, just as in other addresses, this address is general and is not exlcusive to men.

Thirdly: Does the beginning of this tradition that says: "I prohibited you from visiting the graves in the past," include both the male and female gender? If it is not and it is exlcusive to men and does not include both genders, the sentence "so visit them" is general and includes both genders.

Fourthly: Some of these traditions have counted other cases in which the prohibition has been abrogated, such as what is quoted in *Sunan Nesaee* from Ibn Baridah who quoted from his father:

"I prohibited you from visiting graves, now visit them. I prohibited you from from keeping the sacrificed meat for more than three days, now keep as much as you want (for however long). And I prohibited you from keeping date wine unless in a large leathern bottle, now drink it in all dishes and do not drink those drinks that cause intoxication."

Muslim has quoted this tradition that Ibn Baridah quoted from his father, in his *Sahih. Hakem* and Bayhaqi has also quoted it.

Now the question to ask from the commentator of *Sahih Muslim* is whether all the cases, such as "*Famsaku Va Fashrabu*", are exclusive

1. *Surah al-Nisa* Chapter 4, verse 31.
2. *Surah al-Nahl*, Chapter 16, verse 36.

to men or not. If they are general, then "*Fa Zooroha*" is also general. There is no difference between "*Fa Zooroha*" and "*Famsaku Va Fashrabu.*"

The saying of scholars regarding the permissibility of women visiting graves are as follows

Sarakhsi, who is one of the Hanbalite scholars, says:

"And we consider more valid the fact that permission to visit graves is proven for all men and women and it has been narrated from *'Āishah* who visited the grave of the Prophet(s) at any time and whenever she had any need, she would visit the grave her brother Abd A Rahman (may God be pleased with him) and recite this poem:

At one time, we were so busy exploring as if we would never separate / But when you left us, if was as if you and I never spent a night together

Ibn Hij Asqalani has also quoted *'Āishah* reciting these poems next to the grave of Abd A Rahman ibn *Abū Bakr*.

While quoting the sayings, Mohammad ibn Sharbini says:

"And it is said that visiting graves by women is allowed and permitted due to the permissibility principle. The tradition in which the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) curses the women who visit graves is in the case in which weeping and its kind are practised."

What is mentioned in Mughni by Ibn Qudamah and its commentators are the same. He says: "There are different narrations from Ahmad regarding visiting graves by women, in one of which he narrates it as undesirable and in the second narration, he does not regard it as undesirable."

Ibn Hajar says:

Point: Among the narrations that denote the permissibility of women visiting the graves, is what *Muslim* has narrated from *'Āishah.*

He then quotes the *Hakem* narration about Fatima (s) visiting the grave of her uncle Hamzah every Friday.

It is also said in *Mabsut* by Sarakhsi:

"And the more valid in our opinion is that the permissibility of visiting the graves is for both men and women."

The narrations that indicate permissibility

From the collection of narrations in the Sunni books, it can be concluded that some narrations clearly specify its permissibility, and the general, logical and liguistic analysis of the other group is used to prove the permissibility of visiting graves for women.

A) The narrations explicitly indicating permissibility

The tradition quoted by Abdullah ibn Abi Malikah in the fifth response, where *'Āishah* says that after prohibiting visiting graves, the Prophet (s) ordered women to visit graves. She visited the grave of her brother Abd al-Rahman *Abū Bakr*……..Some, including Shookani in *Neil al-Owtar* have used this tradition as proof of the permissibility of women visiting graves.

Bayhaqi quotes from Anas ibn Malik: "And we have seen a proven narration from Anas ibn Malik." In this tradition, the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) passes by a woman crying next to a grave. The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) told her to observe piety and be patient. There are no signs of prohibiting her from leaving for the graveyard in this tradition.

Bakri Dumyati quoting this tradition as proof of the permissibility of women visiting graves has said that there is consensus regarding the tradition.

Mohammad ibn Sharbini Shafe'i has also used the mentioned tradition as proof.

Muslim quotes from *'Āishah* in his *Sahih* where Gabriel, told the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*:

"Truly your lord wants you to leave for Baqi' and seek forgiveness for…."

This tradition clearly implies that *Allāh* ordered his Messenger (s) to come to Baqi' and ask for forgiveness for them. *'Āishah* then asked how and what she should say for them? In response the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) teaches her the way and means of visiting and sending peace on the people of Baqi'. Thus the mentioned tradition clearly shows

the permissibility for women to go to graveyards and visit graves. Ibn Hajar Asqalani, Bakri Dumyati, Mohammad ibn Sharbini have also used this narration as the argument and proof for the permissibility of women to visit graves.

Hakem quotes using evidence from Ja'far ibn Mohammad (a) who quoted from his father who quoted from *Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn* (a) who quoted from his father that:

"Truly, the daughter of the Prophet (s), *Fatimah* (s) visited the grave of her uncle *Ḥamzah* every Friday and prayed over it and wept next to his grave."

This tradition is used to provethe permissibility of ladies visiting the graves (in the book *Takhis al-Habir).*

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani has said: This tradition lacks the first transmittor as *Ali ibn Ḥusayn* did not live during the life of *Fatimah bint Mohammad (a).*

In response to this criticism it must be said that what Hakem has quoted is that *Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn* has quoted from his father, and without doubt *Ḥusayn ibn Ali (a)* was the son of *Fatimah* (s) and lived during the lifetime of his mother. Therefore this tradition has a complete chain of transmitters. In what Bayhaqi has quoted in this tradition after quoting the tradition from al- Ḥakim in *al-Musnad* where he said: and Solaiman ibn Dawud quoted from his father who quoted from *Ja'far ibn Mohammad* (a) who quoted from his father who quoted from *Ali ibn Ḥusayn (a)* who quoted from his father, has not been mentioned.

Bayhaqi says: Its chain of transmittors is disconnected. Therefore what Ḥakim has mentioned regarding this tradition and what Bayhaqi has quoted from him contains no faults or criticism and the transmittors of the second quoting is unknown and there is no need to know it either.

The *Om-'Ateyyah* tradtion that *Muslim* has narrated:

"We, women, were prohibited from visiting graves but this did not become an obligation on us."

B) The narrations whose general, logical and linguistic analysis proves the permissibility of visiting for women.

Here we shall point to some of them:

"I prohibited you from visiting graves, now visit them as there are lessons to learn from visiting graves."

Visit graves; as visiting graves brings about piety in this world and reminds of the next world.

Visit graves; for truly visiting graves reminds one of death and warns about it.

Visit graves; as visiting graves will increase goodness in you.

"I prohibited you from visiting graves in the past. Now visit them as it brings tender heartedness, causes the eyes to shed tears and it warns and reminds of the next world. But do not utter vain words while visiting graves."

Hakem has quoted from Abi Dhar: "The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: Visit graves; through this you will remember the next world."

By all means, the majority of these traditions have been quoted in the discussion on visiting graves of the faithful from other books such as *Sunan ibn Majeh, Sunan Nesaee, Sahih Abi Da'ud* and *Sahih Muslim*. The reasoning the tradition provides is general (i.e. it includes both men and women) for the recommendation of visiting graves. Even if the reasoning is the wisdom of the ruling, it would still not be exclusive to men and includes women as well. In the case of absence of cause, the effect/ruling) will also be absent. However, in the absence of wisdom, the ruling will still be there. Therefore, whether the reasons mentioned in the narrations are the cause of the ruling or its wisdom, it makes no difference between men and women.

If visiting graves causes piety in this world and warns about death and reminds about the next world, men and women are equal in their approach to these benefits and effects.

Sheikh *Sayyid* Sabeq has used the mentioned general logical and linguistic analysis in the narrations as proof and said:

"There is no problem in giving permission to women as reminding about death is something both men and women need and it is not exclusive to men."

The sayings on undesirability

Some sayings on undesirability:

1– The tradition "and the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*has cursed the women who visit graves," clearly declares undesirability mentioned on reasons of unlawfulness, such as in *Sunan Tirmidhi* and the book *Eanatu Talebin* written by Bakri.

2– The tradition by Om Attiah that is mentioned in Mughni by Ibn Qodamah and its commentory by Muslim. The tradition by Om Attiah was:

"We were prohibited from visiting graves however it did not become obligatory." The content implies undesirability.

3– The arguments being:

A) The low-patience level and excessive grief in women…

Abd al-Karim Rafee, and Zakaria Ansari, a Shafite scholar, believe in the above reasons.

B) Musa al-Hijawi Shafe'i has said:

"Visiting graves is undesirable for women as it makes them vulnerable to weeping and raising their voice. However, visiting the grave of the Prophet (s) is recommended for them because it is one of the greatest tools for seeking nearness to *Allāh* and it is worthy to add the visit of other Prophets and the pious ones and the martyrs to this ruling as well."

Nawawi said:

"And visiting and praying over the graves of the people of goodness and virtue is recommended."

Ibn Qodamah says about the saying on undesirability:

"Because women have little patience and grieve a lot, visiting graves will cause incitement of sorrow, grief and the remembering of the tragedy.

Bakr Dumyati and Mohammad ibn Sharbini Shafe'i have said:

"And visiting graves is undesirable for women and for the hermaphrodite, because in women, the grounds for weeping and crying with a loud voice exist, because of tenderness of heart, excessive grief and low tolerance during tragedies."

"Yes, visiting the grave of the Prophet (s) is recommended for women as this is one of the major tools for nearness to *Allāh* for both men and women. Visiting the graves of the other Prophets, the scholars and the saints, like visiting the grave of the Prophet (s) are recommended for women."

Sayings differentiating young women from old women

In the footnotes of the book by Dosoqi, a Malaki scholar, it is said:

"Visiting graves is recommended because of the saying by the Prophet (s): 'I prohibited you from visiting graves in the past, now visit them.' Another proof is of the set of traditions that encourage visiting graves. And the author of *Al-Madkhal* has mentioned three points in his book): first, forbiddance; second, permissibility based on Shariah, i.e., the covering and protecting of women, which contradicts what is customary today; and thirdly, differentiating between young and old women. Tha'alabi is certain about the third saying. His exact statement is: The ruling (as derived from *Shariah*), is that it is permissible for them to visit the graveyard. however in case of young women it is unlawful, because there is the fear of excessive grief.

Malik has pointed to this saying and has said: "I have been told that the souls are perishable in their graves and thus visiting them is not tied to any particular time. But the exclusiveness of Friday is because of its virtues and the spare time on that day."

Sheikh Zoraq has regarded visiting graves as recommended and has considered decorating graves with lights as permissible in *Al-Me'yar*. He has used the words of Ibn Tawoos as his proof and said: "The ancestors used to do this."

Recommending visiting for women

Al-Bani said:

"The recommendation of visiting graves is the same for women as men."

There are some aspects that have been used or can be used as proof for women visiting the graves and they are as follows:

First: The general permission of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) in which he said: "Visit graves" which included both men and women.

Second: The tradition quoted byAbdullah ibn Abi Malikah in which *'Āishah* said that the Prophet (s) ordered women to visit graves.

Third: The narration that Muslim has quoted from *'Āishah* in his *Sahih* in which the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) taught her the procedure of visiting graves.

Fourth: The general logical and linguistical analysis of the narrations encouraging visiting graves to remember death, gain piety, take admonition, remember the next world and increase in goodness, tenderheartedness, and weeping. All these prove the desirability of visiting graves to be the same for women as it is for men.

The conclusion is that there is no consensus on the prohibition of visiting graves; the consensus that exists is on its recommendation.

The permissibility to celebrate, commemorate and seek blessings

The misunderstanding of Wahhabis

In this chapter, we shall analyse and answer the Wahhabi paradoxes regarding commemorating and seeking blessings under three headings:

First: Wahhabis misunderstand the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (s)

The Wahhabis accuse all Mulims of polythesim and innovation in celebrating the birthdays of the Prophets (a) including that of the Prophet (s). These celebrations are not exclusive to Shias; all Muslims celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (s). The Wahhabis also object to gathering for death and martyrdom anniversaries, and have various definitions for them. They consider them as acts of worship, innovation (in religion) and polythesim. They say:

"The commemoration gatherings held under the name of the saints in all cities are forms of worshipping and revering the saints."

The chief manager of scientific dicussions and orders in Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz ibn Abdullah ibn Baz, said in the religious verdict he issued:

"Celebrating the birthday of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) is impermissible because it is one of the innovations that has been added to religion."

There are two issues here:

Are the celebrations and commemorations acts of worship or not?

Are they innovations or not?

An act of worship is placing something as God and considering him effective in his and the world's destiny, and bowing and venerating him through words and action. But the gathering for the birthday of

the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) includes recitation of poems, remembering his way of life and virtues which certainly does not seem like worshipping him. Reciting elegies on death anniversaries are also not signs of worshipping the Imam (a) or the Prophet (s).

A person, slightly familiar with religious laws and issues, would not call them acts of worship. No Muslim even imagines the celebrations and commemorations to be acts worshipping the Prophet (s) or the Imams (a). Surely these acts are honoring, respecting and glorifying the pure Imams (a), but not all honoring and glorifying is worship. If it is so, then any praise for honoring any body would be a form of worship.

You can see that Muslims praise and honor one another and talk about each others good deeds and virtues. They stand up when some one joins their group as a sign of respect. In Saudi Arabia, they constantly honor and admire their king as the "*Khadem al-Haramein*" (the servant of the two shrines). If praise and admiration in general are worship, then they are all polytheists. It is not exclusive to honoring and glorifying the Prophet (s) and the saints. It includes all praise and honor. Thus, all accusations of worship are extremely foolish and unacceptable.

Innovation (in religion) is defined as ascribing an affair to religion and claiming that it is desirable in religion, or it is obligatory or recommended, when it does not exist in the law and teachings of religion and there is no evidence for it. A general or unconditional (absoulte) evidence in hand will suffice, but if such an evidence is not available, it would be adding an affair to religion when it is actually not related to it. Such an affair would be an innovation.

However, if someone performs an act hoping that it is desirable in religion and not claiming that it is a mandatory religious act nor believe that it is a religious act, it would not be called an innovation. Similar to the permissible (*mubah*) acts that man performs without believing that they are desired in religion, these acts are not regarded as innovation.

There are also no problems with other acts without believing that the act is legislated by *Allāh*, and that it has generally or unconditionally not been prohibited, which makes the act permissible. For example

holding a birthday party for a child has not been legally ordered (in shariah) and there are also no prohibitions on it. It is thus permissible (*mubah*) and whoever holds one, will not be accused of innovation as such.

If no one performs an action with the intention of it being a religiously desirable act (*mustahab*) or adds it to religious law (*shariah*), the celebrations and gatherings that are held for remembering the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) and the pure Imams (a), would definitely not be an innovation in religion. However, the question is that if someone performs these acts with the intention of it being a prescribed recommended act, what will the status of such an act be? To answer this question correctly, we must search for a proof for it being recommended so we can determine whether it is religiously desirable or not. Certainly the issue is clear in the school of the Ahlul Bayt because we have narrations saying: "Our follower (*shiah)* is the one who is sorrowful in our sorrows and happy in our happiness."

For the present time, we shall discuss generally the points that imply the desirablity of this deed so that it becomes clear that even if we do not have any exact text regarding the celebrations or commemorations, holding such gatherings is religiously desirable (*mustahab*).

Point one uses Qur'anic verses and narrations of the messenger of *Allāh* (s) that have been quoted through the Sunnis. These imply that honoring the Prophet (s) during his life and after his death is religiously desirable (*mustahab*). One such verse is as follows:

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱلرَّسُولَ ٱلنَّبِيَّ ٱلْأُمِّيَّ ٱلَّذِى يَجِدُونَهُۥ مَكْتُوبًا عِندَهُمْ فِى ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَٱلْإِنجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُم بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَىٰهُمْ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْخَبَٰٓئِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَٱلْأَغْلَٰلَ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ فَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِهِۦ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَٱتَّبَعُوا۟ ٱلنُّورَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ مَعَهُۥٓ ۙ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

"Those who follow the Apostle, the uninstructed Prophet, whose mention they find written with them in the Torah and the Evangel, who bids them to do what is right and forbids them from what is wrong, makes lawful to them all the good things and forbids them from all vicious things, and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them, those who believe in him, honour him, and help him and follow the light that has been sent down with him, they are the felicitous." [1]

A group of commentators have defined the word "Azzaruhu" as "help carried out with honor and revering." In *Majma al-Bayan* and *Jalalein* the commentators have defined it as reverence and honor. In any case, this verse is praising the faithful because they supported and helped the Prophet (s) and they respected, honored and revered him. Honoring, revering and helping the Prophet (s) is not exclusive to those present during his time but it is a general command and includes the time after the life of the Prophet (s) as well.

The verses of the holy Qur'an are not only specific to the time of its revelation but address people of later times as well. A verse that recounts a specific event;

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَآ أَبِى لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ﴾

"Perish the hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he!" [2]

1. *Surah al-A'raf*, Chapter 7, verse 157.
2. *Surah al-Masad*, Chapter111, verse 1.

is addressing *Abū Lahab*, a specific character in history, but it includes every person like *Abū Lahab* at any time and any place by extension.

Anyhow, the faithful will be praised whenever they revere and honour the Prophet (s) during the time of the Prophet (s) and after his death. An example is the following noble verse that says:

﴿لَا تَرْفَعُوٓاْ أَصْوَٰتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ ٱلنَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُواْ لَهُۥ بِٱلْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَٰلُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ﴾

"O, you who have faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak aloud to him as you shout to one another, lest your works should fail without your being aware." [1]

This verse was revealed to the Prophet (s). It commanded people to speak politely with the Prophet (s). Can it have any application after the demise of the Prophet (s)? It is interesting how the Wahhabis read this verse to forbid a person from calling out loud whenever they hear someone praying loudly or asking for something in a loud voice.

At any case, it is clear from this verse that respect, honor and revering the Prophet (s) is very important in religious law (*shariah*) to the extent that it orders people to not even raise their voice before the Prophet (s).

Another verse says:

﴿لَّا تَجْعَلُواْ دُعَآءَ ٱلرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَآءِ بَعْضِكُم بَعْضًا﴾

"Do not consider the Apostle's summons amongst you to be like your summoning one another..." [2]

This verse shows that respecting the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) is extremely necessary in a way that it must be abided by even when calling him. Another verse says:

1. *Surah al-Hujurat*, Chapter49, verse 2.
2. *Surah al-Nur*, Chapter24, verse 63.

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُقَدِّمُواْ بَيۡنَ يَدَيِ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٞ﴾

"O, you who have faith! Do not venture ahead of Allāh and His Apostle, and be wary of Allāh. Indeed Allāh is all-hearing, all-knowing." [1]

There are about thirty verses in the holy Qur'an commanding obedience to the Prophet (s) saying, "*And obey the Apostle*" (*Atee ur-Rasul*) whether in a social or political context, showing the greatness of the Prophet (s). Another verse orders sending *Salutations (salam)* and blessings on the Prophet (s). This verse is also general and includes all times:

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّۚ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسۡلِيمًا﴾

"Indeed, Allāh and His angels bless the Prophet; O, you who have faith! Invoke blessings on him and invoke Peace upon him in a worthy manner." [2]

Another example is that it is obligatory to send blessings (*salwat*) on the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) in the Tashahoud of the prayer for all Muslims. The Prophet (s) said: "After my death, from wherever you send *Salutations (salam)* to me, it will reach me." Therefore, when in the *Tashahoud* we say "Peace be upon you Oh, Prophet (s) and the blessings of *Allāh* be bestowed upon you," it reaches the Prophet (s).

Respecting the Prophet (s) is obligatory. The following noble verse reminds us of this:

1. *Surah al-Hujurat*, Chapter49, verse1.
2. *Surah al-Ahzab*, Chapter33, verse 56.

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَدۡخُلُواْ بُيُوتَ ٱلنَّبِيِّ إِلَّآ أَن يُؤۡذَنَ لَكُمۡ إِلَىٰ طَعَامٍ غَيۡرَ نَٰظِرِينَ إِنَىٰهُ وَلَٰكِنۡ إِذَا دُعِيتُمۡ فَٱدۡخُلُواْ فَإِذَا طَعِمۡتُمۡ فَٱنتَشِرُواْ وَلَا مُسۡتَـٔۡنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكُمۡ كَانَ يُؤۡذِي ٱلنَّبِيَّ فَيَسۡتَحۡيِۦ مِنكُمۡۖ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَسۡتَحۡيِۦ مِنَ ٱلۡحَقِّۚ وَإِذَا سَأَلۡتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَٰعٗا فَسۡـَٔلُوهُنَّ مِن وَرَآءِ حِجَابٖۚ ذَٰلِكُمۡ أَطۡهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمۡ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّۚ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمۡ أَن تُؤۡذُواْ رَسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَلَآ أَن تَنكِحُوٓاْ أَزۡوَٰجَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعۡدِهِۦٓ أَبَدًاۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكُمۡ كَانَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ عَظِيمًا﴾

"O, you who have faith! Do not enter the Prophet's houses unless permission is granted to you for a meal … You may not torment the Apostle of Allāh, nor may you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed that would be a grave [matter] with Allāh." [1]

Even though there is no problem in marrying widowed women and it is encouraged, the Prophet's (s) wives do not get married to others. For this reason, another noble verse has given the position of "Mother of the faithful" to the wives of the Prophet (s) and has said:

﴿ٱلنَّبِيُّ أَوۡلَىٰ بِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ مِنۡ أَنفُسِهِمۡۖ وَأَزۡوَٰجُهُۥٓ أُمَّهَٰتُهُمۡ﴾

"The Prophet is worthier (has more authority) over the faithful than themselves, and his wives are their mothers..."[2]

﴿يَٰنِسَآءَ ٱلنَّبِيِّ لَسۡتُنَّ كَأَحَدٖ مِّنَ ٱلنِّسَآءِۚ إِنِ ٱتَّقَيۡتُنَّ﴾

"O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women: if you profess piety [to Allāh]..."[3]

The Prophet (s) must be revered for his immense greatness. If a group of Muslims gather to revere and glorify the Prophet (s) or read some

1. *Surah al-Ahzab*, Chapter33, verse 53.
2. *Surah al-Ahzab*, Chapter33, verse 6.
3. *Surah al-Ahzab*, Chapter33, verse 32.

poems about his good deeds and virtues and send peace and blessings on him, why do the Wahhabis criticize it. If there is no problem in doing it individually, why should it be unlawful and regarded as an innovation when it is performed congregationally? They are not performing any unlawful or prohibited act.

It is necessary to remember the Prophets (a), their virtues, efforts and sacrifices. Reading the biography of the Prophet (s) in a gathering or speaking about his good deeds in a speech or through poems or articles is a form of reviving the passion for Islam. The following noble verse introduces the Prophet (s) as a true role model and says:

﴿لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلْيَوْمَ ٱلْأَخِرَ﴾

"In the Apostle of Allāh there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allāh and the Last Day,..." [1]

The Prophet (s) is an exemplar, a leader, a guide. Other Prophets (a) and the successors (*awsiya'*) are the same. The holy Qur'an has narrated numerous stories of the Prophets (a) as they guide towards the correct path.

In previous sessions, we read a noble verse in which venerating the divine sacrements had been advised and those who respect these sacrements have been introduced as the pious, the Godwary:

﴿وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى ٱلْقُلُوبِ﴾

"And whoever venerates the sacraments of Allāh, indeed, that arises from the God wariness of hearts."[2]

Any act or sign that is somehow related to religion and reminds people of *Allāh* and the religious teachings is counted as a sacrement. The majority of Hajj deeds are sacrements. Hajj was there from the beginning. According to verses and narrations, the origins of Hajj existed before the time of the Prophet (s). It is said that even Prophet Adam (s) performed Hajj. Today, the acts sincerely performed by Ibrahim (s), Hajar and *Ismā'īl* (a), are a part of Hajj.

1. *Surah al-Ahzab*, Chapter33, verse 21.
2. *Al-Hajj*, Chapter 22, verse 32.

Pacing back and forth seven times by a pilgrim between *Safā* and *Marwah* (*Sa'ay*) is a reminder of what Hajar did in search of water. She passed the divine test with honor and pride. Ibrahim was ordered to leave his wife and child, Hajar and *Ismā'īl* (a) in that dry desert, and he submitted to that order sincerely. They had also submitted to the divine order. However, they became thirsty. The mother unselfishly paced between those two mountains in search of water when suddenly, water appeared from beneath the feet of *Ismā'īl* (a). After leaving them in that dry desert, this is how *Ibrāhīm* (s) prayed:

﴿رَّبَّنَآ إِنِّيٓ أَسۡكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيۡرِ ذِي زَرۡعٍ عِندَ بَيۡتِكَ ٱلۡمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ فَٱجۡعَلۡ أَفۡـِٔدَةٗ مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ تَهۡوِيٓ إِلَيۡهِمۡ وَٱرۡزُقۡهُم مِّنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَشۡكُرُونَ﴾

"MyLord, I have settled part of my family in a barren valley, by Your sacred House my Lord, that they may maintain the prayer. So make the hearts of a part of the people fond of them, and provide them with fruits, so that they may give thanks."[1]

The act of this family caused the followers of all religions, especially Muslims, to venerate this place and the Hajj deeds to be performed in these locations. The Hajj deeds are actually only a reminder of what they did.

After this test, another test followed. Ibrahim (s) saw a dream that showed him sacrificing *Ismā'īl* (a). After being certain that it was a divine order, he discussed it with *Ismā'īl* who responded thus:

﴿فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ ٱلسَّعۡيَ قَالَ يَٰبُنَيَّ إِنِّيٓ أَرَىٰ فِي ٱلۡمَنَامِ أَنِّيٓ أَذۡبَحُكَ فَٱنظُرۡ مَاذَا تَرَىٰۚ قَالَ يَٰٓأَبَتِ ٱفۡعَلۡ مَا تُؤۡمَرُۖ سَتَجِدُنِيٓ إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ﴾

…He said, "Father, do whatever you have been commanded. If Allāh wishes, you will find me patient."[2]

1. *Surah Ibrahim*, Chapter14, verse 37.
2. *Surah Safat*, Chapter 37, verse 102.

And this is how they both submitted to the divine order and…

﴿فَلَمَّآ أَسۡلَمَا وَتَلَّهُۥ لِلۡجَبِينِ ١٠٣ وَنَٰدَيۡنَٰهُ أَن يَٰٓإِبۡرَٰهِيمُ ١٠٤ قَدۡ صَدَّقۡتَ ٱلرُّءۡيَآۚ إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجۡزِي ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ﴾

*"So when they had both submitted [to Allāh's will]and he had laid him down on his forehead,*We called out to him, "O Abraham,*You have indeed fulfilled the vision. Thus indeed do We reward the virtuous!"* [1]

This sincere act performed solely for the sake of *Allāh*, is remembered in Hajj by the act of slaughtering on the day of *Eid al-Qurban*.

Throwing stones at the three pillars (*Ramye Jamarat*) is also the same. According to both Shia and Sunni narrations, Satan intended to tempt Ibrahim on three locations while he was taking *Ismā'īl* (a) to be sacrificed, but Ibrahim (s) repelled him and eventually accomplished his mission. This firmness in performing his duty is an example for every Muslim, so he must throw stones at the first, second and third pillars several times as an obligatory act.

The following is a narration regarding the obligatory stay in *Arafat* until sunset and then moving to *Mashar al-Haram*:

"*Allāh* accepted the repentance of Prophet Adam (a) on the afternoon of the ninth of *Dhil-Hajjah* in *Arafat*. After sunset, Gabriel moved him to *Mashar al-Haram* and he spent the night there praying and thanking *Allāh* for accepting his repentance. In the morning he migrated to *Mina* and shaved his head as a sign of the acceptance of his repentance and his freedom from sins. Thus *Allāh* placed this day as a day of celebration for him and his offspring."

These acts remind us of the repentance and turning to *Allāh* by Prophet Adam (a), and are an obligatory part of Hajj today.

Thus, revering the conduct of the great ones and remembering their sincere acts and worship is not something new and was there from the beginning. As said before, religious law (*shariah*) has made some of

1. *Surah Safat*, Chapter 37, verse 103-105.

them obligatory, and every year, they are performed by Muslims in groups. Celebrating and revering the religious leaders is similar and is an application of the decree that commands venerating the divine sacrements.

Why do they consider venerating divine sacrements as unlawful but do not forbid holding parties for kings on various occasions and on their journeys. Do they not set up decorative lights on various occasions for kings? Do they not hold welcome ceremonies in which they praise and admire them? Why doesn't anyone say anything? These were done before Islam as well, and if they were polytheistic, Islam would have warned them about it and the Prophet (s) would have prohibited these acts.

It is important to remember that if the intellectuals and people perform an act that Islam has not prohibited, then it cannot be called unlawful. For example, the *Nauroz* celebrations were traditionally held in Iran before Islam, yet Islam did not forbid it. Thus celebrating *Nauroz* is not unlawful. No one has the right to introduce something that has not been forbidden in Shariah as unlawful. Similarly, venerating the Prophet (s) and celebrating his birthday and the birthday of the pure Imams (a), are all counted among the divine sacrements, and revering them is desirable in religious law (*shariah*).

However, the issue of commemorating the death anniversaries of the Messenger of *Allāh (s)* and the Ahlul Bayt (a), and gathering to mourn (for the dead) in general, is also something that Wahhabis regard as an innovation in religion and polytheistic.

Second: Wahhabi paradox on gathering to mourn and weep for the dead.

In this section, we shall talk about the mourning ceremonies commemorating the death anniversaries of the Prophet (s), the pure Imams (a), the martyrs, etc. Wahhabis regard such gatherings as unlawful and innovations.

To analyse this issue, we must answer two questions:

Is crying for the dead unlawful?

What is the ruling for holding mourning ceremonies and crying for the dead?

These two questions are separate from weeping for a dead one alone. Wahhabis have recounted some narrations which make them regard crying as unlawful. They have not offered a narration that implies the unlawfulness of gathering to mourn, but what they have recounted regards crying for the dead.

In this section, we shall first present those narrations that are present in Sunni resources that can be used to prove the permission and even desirability of crying for martyrs, Prophets (s) and the pure Imams (a). In the next section, we will analyse the permissibility of crying for the dead.

One of the narrations, that implies permissibility and speaks of the Prophet (s) crying, is the one that has been quoted in *Sahih Bukhari*:

"The Prophet (s) gave the news of the martyrdom of Zaid, Ja'far and ibn Rawaha before the news reached people. He said: "Zaid held the flag and was martyred, then Ja'far held the flag and was martyred, next Ibn Rawaha held the flag and became a martyr. While saying these words, tears flowed down from the eyes of the Prophet (s)."

It seemed as if the Prophet (s) was seeing the battle scene and was crying while describing it. In this tradition crying over the martydom of the faithful, who became the flagholders for Islam, has been clearly emphasised.

This is what has been quoted in another narration from the historians:

"When Ja'far and his companions were martyred in the battle, the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) entered Ja'far's house, gathered his children and came close to them, with his eyes filled with tears. His wife said: "Oh Messenger of *Allāh*! Why are you crying? Have you received any news from Ja'far and his companions?" The Prophet (s) replied: "Yes, they became martyrs today." Asma'a says: "I cried and stood up and women gathered. At this moment, Fatimah (s) entered crying, and said: 'Alas, My uncle!' The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: "People should cry (at the loss of) of someone like Ja'far."

As mentioned in these two narrations, the Prophet (s) himself cried over the martyrs; others cried in his presence and gathered to mourn

in his presence. The Prophet (s) actually advised the people to cry for the likes of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib.

This is what another narration says:

"Anas says: "We entered the house and Ibrahim (the son of the Prophet -s-) was in the agony of death. The Prophet (s) then started shedding tears. Abd al-Rahamn Ouf told the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*: 'Do you also cry for the death of your child?' The Prophet (s) said: 'These tears are out of tenderness. The eye weeps and the heart is sorrowful but we shall not say anything which is not within the pleasure of *Allah*. Oh Ibrahim! We are sorrowful at your loss.'"

From these sentences, it is clear that there is no problem with crying because it is a natural response. Certainly, if one says anything contrary to the Will of *Allāh* and complains about it when he encounters a tragedy, it is problematic, and thus the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) said: 'We shall not say anything that is not within the pleasure of *Allāh*.'

Ibn Majeh continues the above narration in his *Sunan*: "The Prophet(s) hugged the body of Ibrahim and cried."

Now we shall quote another narration: "After the battle of Ohud, when the Prophet (s) heard the sound of crying for the martyrs, he wept and said: 'There is no one to lament for Hamzah.' Sad ibn Ma'adh heard this and brought the Bani Abd al-Ashal women to the house of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) and they cried for Hamzah. When the Prophet (s) heard this, he prayed for those women and returned them home. After that day, none of the female companions cried for a dead person unless she first cried for Hamzah and then cried for her own dead ones."

The permissibility of crying is clear from the above narrations. The crying of the Prophet (s), his expressing grief because Hamzah had no one to cry for him, his approval of the women who had gathered to mourn for Hamzah, and his praying for them. all serve as evidence for this claim.

Until the event of Karbala, Hamzah the uncle of the Prophet (s), was famously known as *Sayyid u Shuhadā'* (the chief of the martyrs) as he had truly devoted himself to Islam and the Prophet (s). The

Messenger of *Allāh* (s) gave him the title *Sayyid u Shuhadā'* and kept his name and memory alive. It is obvious from these narrations that holding such gatherings for martyrs is desirable.

Surely crying for Hamzah had no benefit for him but it was an effective way to revive his objectives. Gathering people and remembering his devotion to Islam influenced the progress of Islam. After the Muslims were defeated in the battle of Ohud and many were martyred, these gatherings helped keep their memory alive. Remembering the moments of glory of the great ones in Islam strengthened their spirits for the next battle and brought them victory.

What made Bani Omayyah collapse after the event of Karbala and the martyrdom of *Abū 'Abdilllāh* (a), was the weeping which started from the very day of Ashura.

In Kufah, *Zainab* (s) read a sermon and people cried. In the Kufah market and the city of Sham, *Zainab* (a) and *Umm-Kulthūm* (a) gave sermons that shook those cities. According to some, mourning ceremonies were even held in Sham. When the family of *Imam Ḥusayn* (a) entered Madina, a big mourning ceremony was held (outside the city). These were the gatherings that have kept the tragedy of Karbala alive until today. Before the event of Karbala, whenever someone passed away, the relatives would first cry for Hamzah and then for their dead one. Today, we consider the grief of the martyrdom of *Imam Ḥusayn* (a) greater than any tragedy and remember his tragedy while mourning for our own.

The *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s) or the custom that has remained from that time till today is actually a political one. Making the chief of martyrs the center of attention arouses human emotion to rise and resist the enemy with high spirits. Placing *Imam Ḥusayn* (a) as the central axis and remembering the event of Karbala has protected Islam from tyrants, oppressors and those gone astray.

We see in history that *Bani-Omayyah* and *Bani-'‘Abbas* made rigorous efforts to stop the devotional ceremonies and visitation of *Imam Ḥusayn*. They destroyed his noble grave many times. They drowned the grave in water. They ploughed the ground and tortured visitors. They cut the tongues of those who recited elegies and poems for him. Bani *Marwān* also committed such acts. The reason for their

opposition of mourning ceremonies for *Imam Ḥusayn* was that these cries shook the tyrannical system of the time.

The Martyrdom of *Imam Ḥusayn* and his companions inspired the Islamic revolution. Without the sermons and the mourning, the great movement of the revolution would not have taken place and the Islamic revolution would not have succeeded.

The order of the Prophet (s) to mourn for Hamzah, *Sayyid u-Shuhadā'*, inspired Muslims to resist enemies with firm determination. This is what has been quoted in a narration that has come in Sunan Ibn Majeh, Sunan Abi Davoud and Sunan Nesaee:

"The Messenger of *Allāh* (s) visited the grave of his mother and cried, which made those around him cry as well."

The collection of these narrations and the other narrations can be used to say that crying for the dead and holding mourning ceremonies is desirable.

Objections to crying for the dead

Contrary to the mentioned narrations, there are other narrations, the chain of transmission of all of them end with *'Umar* and his son Abdullah. In these narrations, *'Umar* and his son Abdullah prohibited crying for the dead. One of the people who attacked him for such a belief and objected to his insistence on this was *'Āishah*. One of the narration is related to the time when *'Umar* was wounded and died afterwards because of it. This is what the narration says:

"When *'Umar* was wounded, Sohayb entered and said while crying: 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my friend!' *'Umar* said: 'Oh Sohayb! Are you crying for me? Surely the Messenger of *Allāh* said: 'The dead will be punished for the crying of his family over him.' Ibn 'Abbas says: 'I recounted this event to *'Āishah* after *'Umar*'s death.' She said: 'God bless *'Umar*! I swear to *Allāh* that the Prophet (s) did not say *Allāh* will punish the faithful because of his family crying over him. He said that *Allāh* will add to the punishment of the pagan because of his family crying over him.'"

There is another narration quoted from *'Āishah* in which she said:

"The Qur'an will suffice you in which it is said:

﴿قُلۡ أَغَيۡرَ ٱللَّهِ أَبۡغِي رَبّٗا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖۚ وَلَا تَكۡسِبُ كُلُّ نَفۡسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيۡهَاۚ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٞ وِزۡرَ أُخۡرَىٰۚ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُم مَّرۡجِعُكُمۡ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمۡ فِيهِ تَخۡتَلِفُونَ﴾

"…and no bearer shall bear another's burde…"[1]

Using this statement, *'Āishah* proved that the saying of *'Umar* was incorrect. It is possible to ask why Allāh should add to the punishment of the pagan because of the crying of his family over him.

There is another narration in *Sahih Muslim* that says:

"Some one told *'Āishah* that *Abdullah Ibn 'Umar* ascribes the following statement to the Prophet (s): The dead will be punished in the grave because his family cries over him. *'Āishah* said: 'The faithful will be punished in his grave because of his mistakes and sins, not because his family is crying over his loss.'"

What this narration means is that crying is not affecting the dead person. He is being punished because of his sins. His family, without knowing about his torment, is crying for him and it is not bevause of their cries that his punishment is increased.

This event has been stated more clearly in another narration which shows that this was about a Jew who had passed away and his family was crying over his loss. This is the actual content of this narration:

"They recounted the saying of *'Umar's* son for *'Āishah,* that was: 'The dead will be tormented for the crying of his family over him. *'Āishah* then said: 'God bless Abd ar Rahman. He has heard something but has not memorised it correctly. This is the correct story. The funeral of a Jew passed by the Messenger of *Allāh (s),* and he heard the family crying for him. When the Prophet (s) saw them crying he said: 'You are crying, but he is being tormented.' This narration is not saying that he is being tormented because of their cries. It rather means that they are not aware of his situation; his being punished and tormented for his deeds."

This event may have been the origin of everything mentioned up to now, which has been changed and ascribed to the Prophet (s),

1. *Surah al-Ana`ām*, Chapter 6, verse 164.

whereas such a statement has not been issued by the Prophet (s) and it is only the imagination of *'Umar* and his son that aggravated such illusions.

When Nawawi saw the excessive occurance of wrong statements, he said:

"The origin of all these narrations falls on *'Umar* and his son Abdullah."

Third topic: the misunderstanding of Wahhabis about seeking blessings from the traces of the Prophets and the Walis (the saints)

Another issue that Wahhabis are extremetly sensitive towards is the seeking of blessings from the traces of the Prophets (s), the pure Imams (a), the saints and the pious ones. They, therefore, regard kissing the shrine or rubbing hands on the shrine or the pulpit of the Prophet(s) as polytheistic, and prohibit visitors from doing so. They sometimes, out of mockery, say: 'This is only wood or a piece of metal, it cannot do anything.'

Surely, as we said before, this issue is not exclusive to Shias. Muslims kiss it, or rub their hands on the shrine for its dust and rub it on their eyes as a blessing.

Love and affection has various forms, one of which is kissing or touching. Some perform these acts with the intention of seeking blessings or getting healed. This may cause one to hesitate about permitting it. However, no Muslim thinks that the dust or the Iron are his healers. What he feels is that *Allāh* will heal him for the sake of the Prophet (s) through the dust on his grave.

Allāh Almighty has placed causes and reasons behind every act and event. For example, the cure for a certain pain is a certain medicine and if that medicine is used as prescribed, it will be effective. However, cure is not always achieved through medicines. The cure for someone is likely to be in the water of *ZamZam,* and if he drinks it believing there is a likelihood of getting cured, he will definitely get cured. Muslims also believe that the water that pours from the golden groove (*Navdane tala*) of *Ka'bah* during rain has healing quality. It is not improbable at all that the cure for pains is present in this water. Surely *Allāh* is the healer and the water cannot do anything. However,

it is not less than any medicine. The *Torbah* (the soil) of *Imam Ḥusayn's* (a) grave is the same. What is the problem if *Allāh* places a cure in this holy *Torbah* and it being effective?

In all these cases, the intention of the one who seeks blessings from the water or the dust on the shrine of the Prophet (s) and the saints is not the water or the dust or the Iron, but the spirituality and generosity of the Prophet (s) and the Saints which can be the reason for his cure.

Believing in the blessings of something is not neccessarily prompted by polytheim in divine lordship or creatorship. However, using tools forbidden by Shariah must be avoided.

There is a story quoted about the late Ayatollah Borojerdi (May he reside in God's paradise).When he was still living in Borojerd and had not moved to Qom, he suffered from severe eye pain. Apparently this illness coincided with the day of Ashura on which the mourning groups rub mud on their faces, head and shoulders, as a symbol of mourning and lament and walk in the streets. He picked some of the mud of the lamentors and rubbed it on his eye with the intention of getting cured. Not only was he cured of his pain but he did not need glasses until the end of his life.

I remember that in the last few years, about nearly a year before he passed away, I saw him in *Masjid Azam* (in Qom) reading a Qur'an written in very small print without glasses.

The late Ayatullah Borojerdi, definitely did not consider the mud to be the healer. However, he honored the lamentors and even the mud they had rubbed on themselves because of the greatness of *Imam Ḥusayn* (a) and he used it as the means of cure for his eyes.

Seeking blessings: Verses and narrations

We come across cases of seeking blessings in Qur'anic verses and narrations, some of which we shall mention here:

1– In the story of Prophet Yusuf (a), when his brothers recognised him and decided to return to Canan, Yusuf gave them his shirt and said:

﴿ٱذۡهَبُواْ بِقَمِيصِي هَٰذَا فَأَلۡقُوهُ عَلَىٰ وَجۡهِ أَبِي يَأۡتِ بَصِيرٗا وَأۡتُونِي بِأَهۡلِكُمۡ أَجۡمَعِينَ ٩٣ وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ ٱلۡعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمۡ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَۖ لَوۡلَآ أَن تُفَنِّدُونِ ٩٤ قَالُواْ تَٱللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَٰلِكَ ٱلۡقَدِيمِ ٩٥ فَلَمَّآ أَن جَآءَ ٱلۡبَشِيرُ أَلۡقَىٰهُ عَلَىٰ وَجۡهِهِۦ فَٱرۡتَدَّ بَصِيرٗاۖ قَالَ أَلَمۡ أَقُل لَّكُمۡ إِنِّيٓ أَعۡلَمُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ﴾

*"Take this shirt of mine, and cast it upon my father's face; he will regain his sight, and bring me all your folk.*When the bearer of good news arrived, he cast it on his face, and he regained his sight. He said," Did I not tell you I know from Allāh what you do not know?"* [1]

Yusuf's shirt was made of cotton or wool or something similar and definitely did not have any healing effect as a medicine, otherwise any cotton or wool shirt would have had this quality. This effect was given by *Allāh* as a result of the blessings of Yusuf (a) and is not in accordance with the natural causes and tools that we are familiar with. Thus, this is a miracle and blessing that *Allāh* bestowed upon Yusuf (a). This is what the Qur'an says and it cannot be doubted. Who can prevent *Allāh's* placing such an effect in iron, wood, water or dust?

It has been repeatedly mentioned in Sunni and Shia traditions that Muslims used to seek benediction from the *wudu* water or the hair of the Prophet (s) to get cured or obtain blessings.

In another group of narrations, which are numerous, it has been quoted that the companions and the generation following them used to seek benedicition from the grave or the pulpit of the Prophet (s) after his death. The cases of seeking benediction are numerous and there are even books written in this regard, one of which is "*A Tabaruk*", written by Ayatollah Ahmadi Miyani, one of the erudites of Howzah Illmiyah in Qom. In this book he has gathered the narrations related to seeking benediction.

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1. *Surah Yusuf*, Chapter 12, verse 93 and 96.

2– Sahl ibn Sad has recounted:

"In the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet (s) said: 'Tomorrow, I will hand the flag to a man in whose hand *Allāh* has placed victory. He loves *Allāh* and His messenger and *Allāh* and His messenger love him too. People passed the night thinking which one of them will get the flag. In the morning, they went to the Prophet (s), hoping that they will be the one to get the flag. The Prophet (s) said: 'Where is Ali?' They said: Oh, Messenger of *Allāh,* he has sore eyes. He still sent for Ali (a). They brought him and the Prophet (s) rubbed his holy saliva on Ali's (a) eyes and his eyes were cured instantly as if they were never sore."

This narration has been mentioned in several chapters of *Bukhari,* and *Muslim* has quoted it in the Book *Fadhael as-Sehaba* (Virtues of the Companions), and in his other books. Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others have also quoted this. This was one of the clear cases of getting cured with other than the normal tools and it did not cause polytheism. This effect has been placed in the saliva of the Prophet (s) by *Allāh's* will, which can also exist in the soil of Karbala, the water of *Zamzam,* and the dust on the shrines of the pure Imams (a).

3– Another example that took place in several locations, including *Hudaybiah,* has been mentioned in various books, including Sahih Bukhari. When the Prophet (s) did *wudu*, his companions would rub the water dropping from his hands on their heads and faces or do *wudu* with the remainder of water for the sake of blessing or, to prevent the water droplets from falling on the ground.

The other narration that *Bukhari* has mentioned says:

"When the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) left Madina in the hot summer with us, they brought him some water to do *wudu,* which he did. The Muslim then grabbed the remainder of water and rubbed it on themselves."

This is how some other narrations have reported it:

"After the Prophet (s) did *wudu*, it seemed the Muslums would kill each other [to get the *wudu* water of the Prophet (s)]."

4– Another narration in *Sahih Muslim* is about seeking blessings from the hair of the Prophet (s):

"After the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) entered *Mina* and threw stones at the three pillars (*Ramye Jamarat)*, he returned to his tent. After sacrificing a camel he told the barber to shave his head, and he pointed to the right side and left side of his head. After shaving the head of the Prophet (s) the barber distributed the hair among the people."

The following is what Anas ibn Malik has quoted in *Kitab al-Haj*:

"I saw the barber busy shaving his (s) head and the companions surrounding him and trying to grab a piece of hair so that no hair fell on the ground."

This is what Bukhari quotes in this case:

"Umme Salamah had kept some of the hair of the Prophet (s) and whenever anyone caught a disease because of the evil eye, they would take a bowl of water to her and she placed the Prophet's (s) hair inside it, and this is how they cured the patient."

The story of seeking benedicition by Khalid ibn Walid from the hair of the Prophet (s):

"Khalid ibn Walid, who showed rigorous effort in the war between Iran and Rome and conquered Damascus, had placed some hair of the messenger of *Allāh* (s) in his headgear which he wore during war for victory and triumph."

This same incident has been spoken about in *Mustadrak Hakem* and *Usud al-Ghabah*:

"Khalid ibn Walid lost his headgear in the Battle of Yarmuk. He told everyone to look for it and find it. It was found after a while and everyone was surprised to see how tattered it was. Khalid then said: "When the Prophet (s) was shaving his head during *Umratu tamatu* and people were picking the hair, I picked the hair from the front part of the head of the Prophet (s) and placed them in this headgear. Since that day, I have not been through any war in which I was not the conqueror."

Now whether this event is correct or not, it is stated as one of the good deeds of Khalid ibn Walid by Sunnis. If seeking blessing was in contradiction to Shariah and an innovation, or, as the Wahhabis say,

could cause polytheism, it would not have been mentioned as a praiseworthy act of Khalid in the books.

History and narration books have quoted quite a few events which show that seeking blessing from the traces of the Prophet (s) was a prevailing, laudable and famous act, and it was not against religious law, an innovation or an act of polytheism.

5– The other narration mentioned in *Sahih Bukhari* is as follows:

"Abu Bardeh says: One day, Abdullah ibn Salam said to me: 'Would you like me to give you water in the bowl that the Prophet (s) drank water from?"

It is clear from this narration that Abdullah had kept the bowl, that the Prophet (s) drank water from and his holy lips had touched, as a valuable and sacred object.

6– There is a narration in *Sahih Bukhari* about seeking blessings or kissing the hand of the Prophet (s) which is as follows:

"In the hot summer, the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) left for the city Bat''ha. He did *wudu* and offered his Zohr and Asr prayers in Qasar form (shortend form). People then stood up and went close to the Prophet (s) to seek blessings. They held the hands of the Prophet (s) and rubbed them on their faces. The narrator says: 'I also held the hands of the Prophet (s) and placed them on my face, the hands that were cooler than ice and more scented than the best perfumes."

Based on this narration people used to seek blessings from the Prophet (s) and he had no objection to it.

7– There are also narrations on the *tahnik* of the newborn and getting blessed by the Prophet (s):

"They brought the children to the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) so that he should bless and *tahnik* them."

Tahnik means placing something in the mouth of the newborn. *Tahnik* was performed by the Prophet (s) either by placing the tip of his fingers in the mouth of the newborn so that it gets blessed by the fingers of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s).

8– There is a story quoted in al-*Esabah (Fi Marefatu Sihabah*) concerning Handhalah, which is also mentioned in *Musnad Ahmad*:

"Handhalah says: 'My father took me to the Prophet (s) and said: 'I have sons that have all grown up and this boy is the youngest of them. Pray for him.' The Prophet (s) rubbed his hand on my head and said: 'May *Allāh* bestow His blessings on this child."

The narrator says: "Later, I saw Handhalah to whom the people would bring those who had swollen faces, and animals whose udders were swollen, and he would say: 'In the name of God', and place his hand on his head on the location where the Prophet (s) had touched it and then rub it on the swollen area and the swelling would decrease."

Whether this story is correct or not, it shows that such things were customary in those days and were not prohibited by any one. Rather, seeking blessings from the Prophet (s) was regarded as a blessing and was mentioned as a praiseworthy act of the person. In *Sahih Bukhari*, at the end of the book on Jihad, numerous examples about the armour, walking stick, sword, plates, stamp and ring and other belongings of the Prophet (s) have been mentioned.

In our view, rubbing ones hand on the shrine or the dust on the grave of the Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams (a) are means of seeking blessings and do not cause polytheism nor are innovations. If this is polythesim, then everything that the historian, the traditions and narrations books have quoted in this regard implies polytheism of their authors, whereas no one has such a view or belief.

Blessings after the demise of the Prophet (s)

The second part of this discussion is about seeking blessing after the demise of the Prophet (s) and has been mentioned in detail in the fifth volume of the noble book *al-Ghadir* under the title *Atabaruk Bel Qabre Sharif*. We have chosen some parts of it which we shall analyse:

1– One of the cases from thirteen valid Sunni books is the story that has been quoted from Imam Ali (a) about Fatimah Zahra (s):

When the Prophet (s) was burried, Fatimah (s) came forward and stood next to the grave and grabbed a fist of the soil of the grave, placed it on her eyes and cried and read this poem:

Whoever smells the soil and dust of Ahmad (s) / Will never be caught in tragedies

I have been thrown into tragedies that / Were they to fall on days, they would become nights

Ali (a) who to say the least, is one of the companions, has quoted this event, and, as the Sunnis say, the sayings of the Companions are proof. He did not criticise or find any fault with what Fatimah (s) did, and Fatimah (s) is the one about whom, according to both Shia and Sunni narrations, the Prophet (s) has said: "*Allāh* is satisfied when Fatimah (s) is satisfied and is angry when she is angry." This act was performed by her and definitely not polytheistic.

2– The other event is related to Bilal which is quoted from eight sources in *al-Ghadir*:

"It is quoted from Abu Dara'a that Bilal saw the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) in a dream saying: "Oh Bilal! What kind of neglect is this? Is it not time you came to visit me?" Bilal got up in grief and fear. He mounted his ride and left for Madina. When he reached Madina, he came to the grave of the Prophet (s) and started crying and rubbed his face on the grave. When *Imam Ḥasan* (a) and *Imam Ḥusayn* (a) entered, he embraced and kissed them."

This narration mentions rubbing ones hand and face on the grave, and no one disapproved of it.

3– The other story is narrated from Ali (a), quoted from eight Sunni sources in *al-Ghadir*:

"It is quoted from Ali (a) that it was three days after the burial of the Prophet (s) when an Arab man came to the grave and dropped himself on the grave and poured the grave soil on his head and said: 'Oh Messenger of *Allāh (s)*! We heard everything you said, and learnt whatever you received from *Allāh*. Among the verses revealed to you is the verse that says:

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ وَلَوۡ أَنَّهُمۡ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمۡ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسۡتَغۡفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسۡتَغۡفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا ﴾

"We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allāh's leave. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allāh for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allāh all-clement, all-merciful."[1]

Oh, Messenger of *Allāh (s)*! I have been oppressive towards my soul. I have come to ask you to pray for my forgiveness.'At this instant, there was a sound from the grave that said: 'Truly your sins are forgiven.'"

4– Abu Ayub Ansari is one of the Prophet's (s) famous companions. He came to visit the grave of the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) when an event took place between him and *Marwān*. This is how this event has been quoted from five sources:

"Da'ud ibn Abi Saleh quoted that one day *Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam* came to the grave of the Prophet (s). He saw a man who had placed his face (or forhead) on the grave. *Marwān* grabbed his neck and said: 'Do you know what you are doing?' That man turned his fave towards *Marwān* and *Marwān* realised that he was Abu Ayub Ansari, one of the companions of the Prophet (s). Abu Ayub said: 'Ofcourse, I know what I am doing! I have not come to visit the stone, but the Prophet (s). I have heard from the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) say that there is no reason to cry when worthy people take charge of the religious leadership. However, if unworthy people and unqualified people take up the religious affairs, cry for religion.'"

In this statement, Abu Ayyub snubs *Marwān,* openly criticising him for unfairly obtaining the governorship of Medina.

Dissidants of Tawassul and Tabarruk

The late Allamah Amini, says:

1. *Al-Nisa*, Chapter 4, verse 64.

"This tradition shows that preventing people from imploring for assistance at the graves of the saints is an innovation of the Ummayads and originates from their deviation since the time of the Prophet (s). The world has never heard any of the companions prohibit imploring for assistance at the grave of the Prophet (s) unless he as an offspring of the Bani Umayyah."

After this statement he says:

"Yes, *Marwān* was right to prohibit visiting and seeking blessings from the Prophet's (s) grave, because the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) had said some sentences about him that made the malvolence of his nature obvious."

Then the late Allamah Amini mentions the narrations that have been quoted by the Sunnis about Bani Omayyah and Bani *Marwān* from the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*.

The following is one of these narrations:

"It has been quoted from the Messenger of *Allāh* (s): When Bani Omayyah reach the year 40 AH, they will regard *Allāh's* servants as their own slaves and make the divine wealth exclusive to themselves and betray *Allāh's* book and practise deceit."

It is also quoted in the *Sahih* from the Prophet (s):

"I saw in a dream that Bani *Marwān* were climbing up my pulpit like monkeys going up a hill. The narrator says: 'After this event no one saw the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) with a happy and joyful face until his death.'"

The other narration that he has quoted about Bani *Marwān* is the following:

It is quoted in the *Sahih*: "When *Marwān ibn Abi Ala'a asked* the Prophet (s) for permission to enter, he said: 'May *Allāh* curse him and those who will be born from his loins, except the faithful ones, and how few they will be. They will become big in this world but in the next world they will be wretched and abject. They are sly and decietful. Their worldly life will flourish but they will be deprived in the next world.'"

Sahih has also narrated that whenever *Marwān* came to the Prophet (s), he would say: "He is a toad, the son of a toad, accursed, the son of the accursed."

Narrations quoted from Ibn *Zubayr*[1] and *'Āishah* also curse *Marwān*. Bani Omayyah and Bani *Marwān* caused great damage to Islam. Marwān, Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik and Walid are all the sons of *Marwān*. They had a grudge and enmity towards Islam and the Prophet (s) and were fearful of the Prophet (s) and the spread of Islam. Their successors, supporters, and companions, were also like them. Hajaj Ibn Yosuf, a governor of Abd al-Malik *Marwān*, followed him in opposing the family of the Prophet (s).

This is what Mubarrad quotes in *Kamil*:

"One of the reasons why the jurists anathemise Hajaj is because when he saw people circumambulating around the grave and pulpit of the Prophet (s), he said: 'These people are circumambulating around several pieces of wood and bones."

In the commentary of *Nahj al-Balagha*, Ibn Abi al-Hadid writes:

"Hajaj was giving a speech in Kufah and he started talking about the visitors to the grave of the Prophet (s) and said: 'Down with those who circumambulate wood and rotten bones. Why do they not circumambulate around the castle of their ruler *Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān*? Do they not know that the Caliph and his successors are better than the Messenger?'"

These words signify the hatred and jelousy that *Bani-Umayyah*, *Bani-Marwān* and their followers had towards the Prophet (s) and his Ahlul Bayt (a) in their hearts.

To make this inveterate hostility more clear, it is necessary to point to the story that Ibn Abi Hadid has quoted from Mutraf, the son of al-Mughira ibn Sho'bah:

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1. *Zubayr ibn al-Awwam* from *Banu Asad*, the son of *Saffiyah bint 'Abd al-Muttalib* his wife was *Asma bint Abu Bakr*, sister of *Aisha*. Their son was *Abd-Allah ibn Zubayr*. He went to war with *'Āishah* and *Talha* against Imam Ali (a) in the Battle of Jamal in 656 C.E and got killed in this battle. Sunnis regard him as one of the Ten Promised Paradise. [Trans].

"Mutrraf says: 'One night, my father was talking in private to Muawiyah and I was waiting for him. When my father came, I saw him very distressed and upset. I asked him what had happened. He said: 'My son! I have come from the most pagan and malevolent of people. I advised Muawiyah to be tolerant towards Bani Hashim now that he had taken over the affairs, so that his name will be remembered with goodness in history.' Muawiyah said: 'What are you saying? Didn't *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar* act justly? Now their name is nowhere. It is only the name of Mohammad that is called out five times a day in the Adhan, and people announce: 'I bear witness that Mohammad is the Messenger of *Allāh*.' No, I swear to *Allāh* that I will not rest before I have buried this name.'"

It is obvious from these words that they had no belief at all and compared the Messenger of *Allāh* (s) to themselves and *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar*. They also had the desire to bury the name of the Prophet (s). This hatred and jelousy was inherited by their successors and each in turn acted oppressively towards the family of the Prophet (s) and caused great tragedies.

5– Ibn Munkadar is one of the *Tabee'en* (the generation after the companions) who passed away in the year 130 AH. He is one of the famously known scholars and Imams of Sunnis. The late Allamah Amini has quoted a story from Ibn Munkadar and mentioned several sources for it:

"Ibn Munkadar was continously in the company of the Prophet's (s) companions. He says that he felt he was becoming deaf so he repeatedly went to the grave of the Prophet (s) and placed his ear over it and returned. He was scolded and blamed for this act. In reply, he said: 'I [have] caught an illness and I ask for its cure from the grave of the Prophet (s).'"

6– This is what Abdullah *Ibn 'Umar* has quoted about his father:

"My father was on his way to Hajj with a couple of his companions. In one of the houses (we stopped in) an old man appealed to my father and asked for help. When *'Umar* returned from Hajj, he entered that house and asked about the old man and found that he had passed away. I saw my father moving really fast with long steps towards the

grave of the old man and praying over it. He then embraced the grave and cried."

Visiting graves and seeking blessings from them in religious verdicts

One of the scholars is Abdullah, the son of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who said:

"I asked my father Ahmad ibn Hanbal what the ruling was for someone who touched or kissed the pulpit of the Prophet (s) for the sake of blessings or did something similar to the grave of the Prophet (s) in the hope of divine rewards?"

After quoting the religious verdict of being lawful, Allamah Amini quotes a story from one of the Malakite scholars and says: Allamah Ahmad ibn Mohammad ibn Muqri, deceased 1041 AH, has quoted from one of the narrators: 'I saw the hand written religious verdict by Ahmad ibn Hanbal in this regard and showed it to Ibn Taymiyyah.' Ibn Taymiyyah was surprised and said: 'Ahmad has surprised me! I considered him a great man but I am surprised why he issued this verdict.'

The narrator of the above then adds: "There is no surprise in this because it is narrated about Imam Hanbal that he washed the shirt he had got from Shafe'i and drunk the water he had used."

He then says: "When Ahmad ibn Hanbal expresses such respect and reverence towards the people of knowledge, what is the problem with treating the graves of the companions, let alone the traces of the divine Prophets (may *Allāh*'s peace and blessing be bestowed upon them).

He then recites this poem:

I will search the land of the beloved / And kiss this wall and that house

Not for love of the land but rather / The love of the resident of that land

Who made me fall in love

PART 2
THE NON-EXISTENCE OF DISTORTION IN THE QUR'AN

– Shias believe in the non existence of distortion in the Qur'an

– The verbal definition of the term "distortion"

– The Shia erudites do not accept distortion in the Quran

– A glance at the narrations on distortion

– Types of distortion in the Quran

– Distortion according to the Sunnis

– Reasons for non-distortion of Quran

– The reasons of those who believe in the existence of distortion

Shias believe in the non existence of distortion in the Qur'an

The non existence of distortion in the Qur'an

The holy Qur'an is one of the everlasting and eternal miracles of the great Prophet of Islam (s). Since the beginning of its revelation, this eternal miracle challenges everyone, including man and Jinn, to bring ten Surahs (chapters) or even one Surah, like those in the Qur'an. This has been repeated in various verses such as the following:

﴿قُل لَّئِنِ ٱجۡتَمَعَتِ ٱلۡإِنسُ وَٱلۡجِنُّ عَلَىٰٓ أَن يَأۡتُواْ بِمِثۡلِ هَٰذَا ٱلۡقُرۡءَانِ لَا يَأۡتُونَ بِمِثۡلِهِۦ وَلَوۡ كَانَ بَعۡضُهُمۡ لِبَعۡضٖ ظَهِيرٗا﴾

"Say, Should all humans and jinn rally to bring the like of this Qur'an, they will not be able to bring the like of it, even if they assisted one another." [1]

﴿أَمۡ يَقُولُونَ ٱفۡتَرَىٰهُۖ قُلۡ فَأۡتُواْ بِعَشۡرِ سُوَرٖ مِّثۡلِهِۦ مُفۡتَرَيَٰتٖ وَٱدۡعُواْ مَنِ ٱسۡتَطَعۡتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾

"Do they say he has fabricated it? Say, then bring ten surahs like it, fabricated, and invoke whomever you can, besides Allāh, should you be truthful." [2]

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1. *Surah al-Isra*, Chapter 17, verse 88.
2. *Surah Hud*, Chapter 11, verse 13.

﴿وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾

"And if you are in doubt concerning what We have revealed to Our servant, then bring a surah like it, and invoke your helpers besides Allāh, should you be truthful."[1]

These challenges are not exclusive to the era of revelation and the time of the Prophet (s). It was unremitting before, still is, and will be until the Day of resurrection. The holy Qur'an regards itself as the guide and saviour of all people and says: 'I will guide people from darkness to enlightenment.' The holy Qur'an also introduces it self in the following verses:

﴿الٓمٓ ۝١ ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ ۛ فِيهِ ۛ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝٢﴾

*"Alif, Lām, Mim * That is the Book, there is no suspicion about it, a guide for the Godwary." 2*

﴿إِنَّ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ﴾

"Indeed this Qur'an guides to what is most upright,…." [3]

﴿شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ﴾

"The month of Ramadān is one in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance to mankind, with manifest proofs of guidance and the Criterion…."[4]

1. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 23.
2. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 1-2.
3. *Surah al-Isra*, Chapter 17, verse 9.
4. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 185.

﴿الٓرۚ كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلۡنَٰهُ إِلَيۡكَ لِتُخۡرِجَ ٱلنَّاسَ مِنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ﴾

"Alif, Lām, Ra, This is a Book We have sent down to you that you may bring mankind out from darkness into light…."[1]

﴿قَدۡ جَآءَكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ نُورٞ وَكِتَٰبٞ مُّبِينٞ﴾

"….Certainly there has come to you a light from Allāh, and a manifest Book." [2]

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدۡ جَآءَتۡكُم مَّوۡعِظَةٞ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَشِفَآءٞ لِّمَا فِي ٱلصُّدُورِ وَهُدٗى وَرَحۡمَةٞ لِّلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ﴾

"O mankind! There has certainly come to you an advice from your Lord, and a cure for what is in the hearts, and a guidance and mercy for the faithful." [3]

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدۡ جَآءَكُم بُرۡهَٰنٞ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَأَنزَلۡنَآ إِلَيۡكُمۡ نُورٗا مُّبِينٗا﴾

"O mankind! Certainly a proof has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a manifest light." [4]

If any one says the holy Qur'an has been distorted, it will lose its credibility and not be accepted as guidance for mankind, a manifest light, the cure for hearts, the proof of *Allāh*, and the eternal and everlasting miracle of the great Prophet of Islam (s).

Even though Shia scholars consider the non existence of distortion in the holy Qur'an, a rare group of Shias have wrongly assumed that some verses or words in the holy Qur'an were on purpose deleted by the opposers of the Ahlulbayt (a) while compiling the Qur'an, such as the verses that explicitly stated the Imamate and leadership of Ali (a) and the household of the Prophet (s), with the intention of distancing

1. *Surah Ibrahim*, Chapter 14, verse 1.
2. *Surah al-Ma'edah*, Chapter 5, verse 15.
3. *Surah Yunus*, Chapter 10, verse 57.
4. *Surah al-Nisa'*, Chapter 4, verse 174.

people from the Ahlul Bayt (a) and freeing their hands (the opposers) in this matter.

They believe in the omission of verses or words in the Qur'an and not addition. In other words, they say that everything in the present Qur'an is from *Allāh*. All the present verses and chapters are from *Allāh* and nothing has been added to it. Our answer to this is that if there is any damage to the authoritiveness of the Qur'an, all the principles and branches of our belief including the issue of Caliphate and leadership of Ahlul Bayt (a) will become questionable. This is because we obtain the authority of the saying of the Prophet (s) from the Qur'an. It is said in the Qur'an:

﴿وَمَآ ءَاتَىٰكُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَىٰكُمۡ عَنۡهُ فَٱنتَهُواْ﴾

"…Take whatever the Apostle gives you, and relinquish whatever he forbids you..." [1]

﴿أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ﴾

"…Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle…."[2]

We regard the saying of the Prophet (s) as proof and authority and accept that he said:

"I leave behind, among you, two valuables; the book of *Allāh*, and those close to me, my Ahlul-Bayt (a). These two will never separate until they join me on the pool."

And this saying of the Prophet (s) makes the sayings of the Pure Imams (a) authoratative, because these great people are one of the two valuables to which, if the Islamic nation adheres, it will not go astray.

The foundation of Islamic teachings is the Qur'an. We refer to this great book to prove all our principles of belief and regard it as the first valid evidence on Islam. The belief in distortion in the Qur'an, whether by a Shia or a Sunni harms all Islamic teachings.

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1. *Surah al-Hashr*, Chapter 59, verse 7.
2. *Surah al-Nisa'*, Chapter 4, verse 59.

There are narrations that clearly tell Muslims to accept only those traditions and narrations which do not contradict the Qur'an. There are also narrations that say if you do not understand the meaning or definition of a tradition or narration, ask the pure Imams (a). Thus the Quran is the basis of Islam and if someone says the present Qur'an is authoratative but incomplete, the consequence of incompleteness will create doubt in the authoratativeness of the present Qur'an.

Distortion in Torah and Bible

The two divine books, the Torah and the Bible, were distorted by the pagans and foreigners to enable them to achieve their religiously illegal objectives. The rumours on the distortion of the holy Qur'an were distributed and spread by the pagans, Jews and Christians, so that they could present the words of *Allāh*, the holy Qur'an, as a distorted book like the Torah and the Bible, and become unreliable, and thus distance people from it and its rich teachings, and achieve the same results they got from distorting the Torah and the Bible,

There are two groups who consider distortion in the Qur'an

A) Christians: They believe that just like the Torah and Bible were distorted, the Qur'an has been distorted and it is not possible to prove something based on its authority.

B) Some Muslims, both Shia and Sunni, who believe that the holy Qur'an has been distorted and the present Qur'an is not all that was revealed to the final Messenger (s).

Accusing Shias

The *Ithna Ashari* Shiites (who follow the twelve Imams) are accused of considering distortion in the Qur'an, saying some of its verses, including the verse on leadership, has been removed on purpose by the adversaries of the Ahlul-Bayt (a). We shall quote the accusations made by some Sunni scholars against the Shia and then answer all of them:

1– Rafe'e

Rafe'e is one of the Sunni Scholars, who says:

"Shia, (May *Allāh* belittle them), think that the Qur'an has been changed, transformed, something added to it or omitted from it, or been displaced from its revealed position.

Shias also believe that the Islamic nation has caused this distortion in the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) as well. All these originate from the illusions of the Shia scholar, *Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam,* and the cause of all these illusions are issues which cannot be mentioned here. Out of ignorance and mindlessness, Shias follow him in this and accept his saying that the Qur'an has been distorted."

2– Ali ibn Hazam Dhaheri:

Ali ibn Hazam is another Sunni scholar. This is how he judges Shias:

"From the past till today, all the Imamiyahs (the Shiites) believe that the Qur'an has been changed; many additions and omissions have appeared in it, and many words have been changed. *Sayyid Murtadhā 'Alam al-Hudā* is the only one among the Imamiyahs who believes that no distortion has occurred in the Qur'an. *Sayyid Murtadhā* was a Shia but pretended to be a Mu'tazallite because he rejected the idea of distortion in the Qur'an and anathemized the one who said the Qur'an had been distorted."

3– Alusi

Alusi is also another one of the Sunni scholars who has raged at Shias in the introduction of his commentory and written the following:

"Shias have the illusion that *Uthman,* and even *Abū Bakr* and *'Umar,* distorted the Qur'an and deleted many of the verses and chapters. (He then quotes some chapters from *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* from which distortion can be understood and then says): According to the Shias, the Qur'an in the hands of Muslims in the east and the west, the centre and focus of Islam, has been distorted even more than the Torah and the Bible and its literature is also weaker than the Torah and the Bible and contains more falsehood, and you are aware that this saying, being the Shia saying, is more frail than the spider's house (web), and truly the house of a spider is the most frail of all houses. And you will not doubt the foolishness of this saying and the mindlessness of the accuser. When some of Shia scholars became aware of the indecency

and obscenity of this saying (on Qur'an distortion), they said in their defence: 'This is only exclusive to some scholars.'"

You can see how severely they attacked the Shias.

The verbal definition of the term "distortion"

The infinitive noun (*Maṣdar*) of the word *Tahrīf* (distortion) is from the form *Taf'īl: Harrafa, Yoharrefu, Tahrīfan.* This is how they have defined this term:

«التحريف بالشيء: إمالته والعدول به عن موضعه إلى جانب»

"Distortion in something is inclining it to an edge and deviating from its [main] position."[1]

The main root of the word *Tahrīf* is *Harf* which means "on the verge."

Rāghib, the linguist, says:

«حرف الشيء: طَرَفُهُ، وجمْعُه: أحرف، وحروف؛ يُقال: حرف السيف، وحرف السفينة، وحرف الجبل. وحروف الهجاء: أطراف الكلمة، والحروف العوامل في النحو: أطراف الكلمات الرابطة بعضها ببعض»

"It is said that *Harf al-Sayf* means on the verge of something, and its plural is *Ahruf* and *Horuf*. It is said that *Harf al-Sayf* and *Harfu al-Safinah* and *Harf al-Jabal* mean "on the verge of; the sword, the ship and the mountain," and the alphabet letters, that is letters on the sides of the words, and the operating letters in Syntax, mean thoseletters that are placed next to the words to join some to others."[2]

Also:

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1. *Syanat al-Qur'an minat-tahrif*, P13.
2. *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*, P19.

«وتحريف الشيء: إمالته كتحريف القلم، وتحريف الكلام: أن تجعله على حرف من الاحتمال يمكن حمله على الوجهين»

"Distortion of an object means diverting it to a side and direction; for example, distorting a pen [while sharpening it and inclining it to a direction], and distortion of a sentence means perceiving it as one of its probable meanings." [1]

The word *Harf*, has also been used in the Qur'an:

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَعۡبُدُ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ حَرۡفٖۖ فَإِنۡ أَصَابَهُۥ خَيۡرٌ ٱطۡمَأَنَّ بِهِۦۖ وَإِنۡ أَصَابَتۡهُ فِتۡنَةٌ ٱنقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجۡهِهِۦ﴾

"And among the people are those who worship Allāh on the [very] edge: so if good fortune befalls him, he is content with it; but if an ordeal visits him he makes a turnabout..."[2]

Zamakhshari has interpreted this verse, thus: on the side and edge of religion, not its heart and nature. He then says:

"This statement is a proverb on those who do not have stability and certainty in their religion and their faith and worship is full of restlessness, defamation and doubt. They are like the persons who stand at the edge of the army. If they sense victory and windfall, they will stay but if they sense defeat, they will turn back and flee."

This is how some worship *Allāh.* If turning to religion and worshipping *Allāh* has benefits for them, they will remain on their belief and stay among the servants of *Allāh,* if it harms them, they will leave religion.

Two kinds of meaning

There are two kinds of meaning: primary and secondary. The primary meaning denotes its obvious, universally accepted meaning. For example, the term *water*, obviously means the life-giving liquid.

1. Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an, P19.
2. *Surah Haj*, Chapter 22, verse 11.

Water, in the Arabic language, is called *Ma'e*. The secondary meaning is defined as the figurative meaning. It is deciphered by the evidence in the sentence or present between the speaker (*Mutakalim*) and the audience (*Mukhatab*). If actually regarded as a meaning, it would be an indication of the word in its convened meaning since words in relation to their figurative meaning have a general and specific convention similar to relational uniformity. However, in spite of the relation betweem those two, such as the neighbourhood relation, corporative relation, the cause and causative relation, this is distortion; distortion of word and sentence. It is deviating from its natural meaning or, is a figurative meaning in a direction that we desire.

Thus, distortion of word and sentence is when we perceive the meaning of the word and sentence to be what we desire which is not the true or the figurative meaning. This is what is said in "*Lisan ul Arab*" about the lexical meaning of this term: "Distortion in the Quran, or distortion in word, is when we change the meaning of the term."

Analysing the term 'distortion' in the Quran

Distortion in a sentence is sometimes called: "distortion of a word", "distortion of words", "distortion of a sentence", "distortion of a book" or "distortion of the Qur'an." There are four instances of "distortion in a sentence" mentioned in the holy Qur'an, which we shall now analyse:

1– The first verse:

﴿أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُواْ لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَٰمَ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

"Are you then eager that they should believe you, though a part of them would hear the word of Allāh and then they would distort it after they had understood it, and they knew [what they were doing]?."[1]

What does distortion mean in this verse?

1. *Surah Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 75.

It means interpreting and defining the words of *Allāh* according to own's wish, desire and opinion.

Surely the meaning of distortion here is not the technical meaning of distortion but it is its lexical meaning which is pointed out: "They can comprehend the meaning of *Allāh*'s words and understand them, however, they have declined from the true meaning and natural conventions and have interpreted and defined the words of *Allāh* according to their own desires.

Allāh then says: Do you expect those who distort the words of *Allāh* in such a way and deviate it from its meaning, to convert to you? No, they will never convert and you also should not have such expectations from them.

2– The second verse says:

﴿مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ هَادُواْ يُحَرِّفُونَ ٱلْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِۦ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا﴾

"*Among the Jews are those who pervert words from their meanings and say, "We hear and disobey*"…"[1]

This noble verse is about the Jewish tribe. The majority of the interpreters, except for the late Allamah Tabataei, have defined this as follows:

"The Jewish tribe interpreted and defined Torah and Bible in a way that neither the terminology nor figurative meaning was conventional, but as they wished and desired."

This is how the author of "*Tafsir al-Manār*" has defined distortion. He quotes from his master who said:

"There are two meanings to distortion: one is to perceive the interpretation of a sentence to be other than its conventional meaning, and it was this interpretation that forced the Jews to deny the Prophethood of the Prophet (s)…. The second is taking a word or a number of words from a location in a book and placing them in another location of the book."

Following the above mentioned verse, Zamakhshari says:

1. *Surah Nisa*, Chapter 4, verse 46.

"They denied the word its place and destroyed it."

However, regarding the above verse, the late Allamah Tabatabaei has a different view. He has considered a general meaning for the term distortion in his valuable commentary and says:

"*Allāh* has described the Jewish tribe as those who distort the words of *Allāh* by changing their location (e.g. placing them back and forth) or essentially deleting some of the words compeletly or adding some words themselves to the book of *Allāh.* The fate that the Torah encountered was this because most of its content is not from *Allāh* or what came from *Mūsā* (a) or the other Prophets (a). The Torah has been interpreted by them as other than what it actually meant and was intended, and the true meaning of it was abandoned, and it was interpreted and explained the way the Jews wanted. They also interpreted the glad tidings of the coming of the Messenger of Islam (s) in the Torah, and what there was on the glad tidings of the coming of *'Isā* (a), before the Prophet (s) and said: 'The awaited one has not come until today and we are still waiting for his coming.'

3– The third verse in which *Allāh* has spoken about "distortion" in the holy Quran is in Surah *Māidah,* where He says:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً ۖ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ ﴾

"… and We made their hearts hard: They pervert the wordings from their positions (or: meanings)…." [1]

Clearly, in this noble verse the meaning of "distortion" is interpreting according to subjective opinion and giving an explanation for the words other than the intended meaning of the verse, where *Bani-Isrāil* committed numerous cases of distortion and changed the real meaning and disregarded the glad tidings given by *Mūsā* (a) and *'Iisā* (a) and caused a severe misleading of people.

4– The fourth verse in the holy Quran which has spoken about distortion is in Surah *Maedah* where it says:

1. *Surah al-Ma'edah*, Chapter 5, verse 13.

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ لَا يَحۡزُنكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُسَـٰرِعُونَ فِي ٱلۡكُفۡرِ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِأَفۡوَٰهِهِمۡ وَلَمۡ تُؤۡمِن قُلُوبُهُمۡۛ وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ هَادُواْۛ سَمَّـٰعُونَ لِلۡكَذِبِ سَمَّـٰعُونَ لِقَوۡمٍ ءَاخَرِينَ لَمۡ يَأۡتُوكَۖ يُحَرِّفُونَ ٱلۡكَلِمَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَوَاضِعِهِۦۖ يَقُولُونَ إِنۡ أُوتِيتُمۡ هَـٰذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِن لَّمۡ تُؤۡتَوۡهُ فَٱحۡذَرُواْۚ وَمَن يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ فِتۡنَتَهُۥ فَلَن تَمۡلِكَ لَهُۥ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيۡـًٔاۚ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَمۡ يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ أَن يُطَهِّرَ قُلُوبَهُمۡۚ لَهُمۡ فِي ٱلدُّنۡيَا خِزۡيٞۖ وَلَهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٞ﴾

"O Apostle! Do not grieve for those who are active in[promoting]unfaith, such as those who say, "We believe", with their mouths, but whose hearts have no faith, and the Jews, who eavesdrop with the aim of [telling]lies [against you]and eavesdrop for other people who do not come to you. They pervert words from their meanings, [and] say," If you are given this, take it, but if you are not given this, beware!" Yet whomever Allāh wishes to mislead, you cannot avail him anything against Allāh. They are the ones whose hearts Allāh did not desire to purify. For them is disgrace in this world, and there is a great punishment for them in the Hereafter."[1]

The occasion of revelation and the event of these noble verses is the following: Two Jewish aristocrats committed adultery [2] while they were married. The Jewish Rabbis decided to change and distort the ruling in the Torah to save their status, and lash the two adulterers instead of stoning them to death. However, they were fearful of acting on their decision. Therefore, they sent a group to the Prophet (s) to ask about the ruling on the issue, as he knew the Torah better than the Jews themselves. They told the group: "We want to lash these two adulterers instead of stoning them to death. Thus, if the Prophet (s) issues our ruling and says 'Lash them', accept his ruling but if he orders stoning to death, do not accept his ruling."

1. *Surah Ma'edah*, Chapter 5, verse 41.
2. Adultery committed by married women [trans].

When they asked the Messenger of *Allāh (s)*, he said: 'They must be stoned to death.' The Jewish messengers did not accept the ruling of the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) asked Ibn Soriya about the ruling on adulterers' in the Torah and said: 'I put you on the oath of *Allāh* and His verses to speak the truth and state the ruling in the Torah. *Ibn Ṣoriya* confirmed the Prophet's (s) ruling and said: 'Till this moment, the stoning to death ruling is present in the Torah…'

Allah (swt) then says:

﴿سَمَّـٰعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكَّـٰلُونَ لِلسُّحْتِ ۚ فَإِن جَآءُوكَ فَٱحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ ۖ وَإِن تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَن يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَٱحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَكَيْفَ يُحَكِّمُونَكَ وَعِندَهُمُ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةُ فِيهَا حُكْمُ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَآ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾

*"Eavesdroppers, with the aim of [telling] lies, eaters of the unlawful, if they come to you, judge between them, or disregard them. If you disregard them, they will not harm you in any way. But if you judge, judge between them with justice. Indeed Allah loves the just.*And how should they make you a judge, while with them is the Torah, in which is Allah's judgment? Yet in spite of that they turn their backs [on Him] and they are not faithful.."* [1]

As you noticed, here also, the term "distortion is used as changing the meaning of the word from its actual and true meaning. The Jews changed the stoning-to-death ruling and wanted to lash the adulterers. However, they did not achieve their objective and were disgraced.

The technical meaning of distortion is like its verbal meaning; change and transformation.

1. *Surah Ma'edah*, Chapter 5, verse 42-43.

The Shia erudites do not accept distortion in the Quran

The followers of the pure and infallible Ahlul Bayt (a), famously known as Shias, are accused by their enemies of considering distortion in the Quran and we mentioned some of the accusations. These accusations are either out of ignorance or some other motives, for which they want to attack Shias, in order to achieve their objectives.

1– Sheikh Sadooq

One of the great Shia scholars, Sheikh Sadooq passed away in the year 381 A.H. close to the time of the minor occultation of Imam Zaman (a), which started in the year 255 A.H and Sheikh Sadooq was born around 306 A.H. Thus, he perceived the minor occultation and was more aware of the time of the pure Imams (a) and Shia beliefs.

Sheikh Sadooq has compiled the Shia beliefs in his book, "*Al-Aqaed Al- Imamiyah*" (The Imamiyah beliefs). This book is also famously known as "*E'teqadate Sadooq*", (The beliefs of Sadooq). His views about distortion in the Quran are:

"Our belief (the Shias) is that the Quran revealed to the Prophet (s) was not any more than what is now in the hands of people. The number of chapters (surahs) present in the Quran is one hundred and fourteen chapters. To us, Surah *Ilaf* (Surah Qoraysh-107) and *Alam Tara Kayfa* (Surah Fil-105) are counted as one Surah, and Surah *Dhoha* (93) and Surah *Alam Nashrah* (Inshirah-94) are counted as one Surah. Thus as a precautionary in prayer, one must not suffice in reading one of these Surahs but must read both.

And whoever accuses us and says we say the (content of the) Quran revealed to the Prophet (s) was more than the present Quran; he is a liar, and is unfairly accusing us, the Imamiyah tribe."

This is the verdict and view of one of the great Shia erudite scholars who has explicitly rejected distortion in the Quran even though he is

one of the traditionalist, and he draws upon narrations for all the principles (*Usul*) and branches (*Foroo'*).

2– Sheikh Mufid

The famous Shia Jurist and theologian, Sheikh Mufid passed away in the year 413 A.H. Since he was the greatest Marja' (religious legal authority) of his time and had a great influence among the groups and individuals of his time, he faced a lot of questioning (request for advisory/Fatwa) which he answered. A part of those discourses have been collected in a book called "*Ajwabatu Al Masael Al Sarwiyah.*" The following is one of them:

"If some one says: 'How far is it correct to say the Quran that is available to people today is truly the Word of Allah (swt) with no omissions and additions, whereas, you quote from the pure Imams (a) that instead of:

﴿كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُم ۚ مِّنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

"You are the best nation ever brought forth to men."[1]

They said:

﴿ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ﴾

"You are the best Imams ever brought forth to men."

Or instead of:

1. *Surah Al 'Imran*, Chapter 3, verse 110.

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا ٱلْقِبْلَةَ ٱلَّتِى كُنتَ عَلَيْهَآ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعُ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِن كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَٰنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

"We have made you a middle nation."[1]

They said:

﴿ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ فَٱعْبُدُوهُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَكِيلٌ﴾

"We have made you the middle Imams."

Or again instead of reading:

﴿يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْأَنفَالِ﴾

"They ask you concerning the anfal."[2]

They read:

﴿ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ فَٱعْبُدُوهُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَكِيلٌ﴾

"They ask you, the anfal."

They are all in contradiction to the Quran that is available to people, today.'

The late Shiekh Mufid said: Whoever asked this question, the answer given was: The traditions quoted from the pure Imams (a), which you

1. *Surah Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 143.
2. *Surah al-Anfal*, Chapter 8, verse 1.

quote, are all *Khabar e Wahid*, (traditions with a single transmitter) and one cannot be definite and certain about their validity. For this reason we waive such cases and obey the orders given to us to follow the Quran that is available to people today, because the pure Imams (a) clearly stated: 'Any narration that is not in accordance with the Quran and wisdom, leave its knowledge (understanding) to us.'

In addition to this, no one rejects the fact that the holy Quran may have two forms of recitations (Qira'at), one is the Quran and the other in some narrations. The adversaries explicitly admit: 'The holy Quran was revealed in several forms.'

3– Sayed Murtadha

Sayed Murtadha, or *Alum ul Huda*, is another one of the Shia scholars who passed away in the year 436 A.H. He also uses strong and firm arguments on the non-existence of distortion in the Quran. The following are his words in the introduction of *Majma al Bayan*:

"The knowledge of the transmission of the Quran is similar to the knowledge of [the existence of] cities and great events (such as the knowledge of Mecca, New York, etc… or events such as the sorrowful event of Karbala and the attack on Iran by the Moguls, etc…), famous books and Arabic literature. Muslims paid extreme attention to safe guard the Quran at the highest possible level.

Since the Quran was the miracle of the Prophet (s) and the source of religious legal laws and rulings, the Muslim scholars protected and supported it. If any disagreement appeared on its recitation, inflection, letters or verses, they were totally familiar with it. With this extreme endeavour and total familiarization, how was it possible for any change or damage to occur to the holy Quran?"

Sayed Murtadha (may God sanctify his spirit) also said: "The knowledge of the details and particulars of the validitiy of its transmission is the same as the knowledge of the whole Quran. For example, in the case of *Sibywiya* and *Al-Mazani*, those who attach importance to literature are fully aware of these two books to an extent that if any one added even one page on Syntax sciences, the professionals will immediately reckon and figure out that this page is not part of the main book and has been added to it. Taking the above

into account, it is completely obvious that if *Sibywiya* and *Al-Mazani* are so important, then the holy Quran definitely deserved paying attention to."

He also said that the holy Quran was gathered and compiled at the time of the Prophet (s). He reasons that at that time the whole Quran was taught and memorised. The Prophet (s) had even made it an obligation and selected some of the companions who used to memorise and inform the Prophet (s) of their memorisation and recite the Quran to him. Some companions such as Ibn Masood and Abi ibn Ka'ab repeatedly finished the Quran before the Prophet (s) with ease. All these denote the fact that the Quran was not scattered and dispersed but was rather organised and written [at that time]. Sayed Murtadha firmly rejects distortion in the Quran, saying, at the end, that the views of those who disagree with us on this issue are disregarded.

4– Sheikh Tousi

One of the great Shia scholars and a genius of his time was the late Sheikh Tousi. He said:

"And the purpose of (writing) this book is to study the techniques of finding the objectives of the Quran. However, speaking of addition or subtraction in the Quran is not worthy of this book since there is a consensus on the rejection of addition in the Quran. The Muslim doctrine is contrary to believing in any shortcoming in the Quran, and in our doctrine this is regarded as more valid. Sayed Murtadha has also approved and supported this saying and this is also the impression that it is obtained from the narrations. However, through groups and individuals, numerous narrations have been reported on shortcomings in some Quranic verses and the shuffling of a verse from one place to another. Nevertheless these are *Khabar e Wahid* (narrations with a single transmitter) and cannot be accepted and it is better to disregard them and not get involved with them."

5– Allamah Hilli

Another great Shia scholar, Allamah Hilli, in one of his responses on the non-existence of distortion in the Quran, says:

"The truth is that no change, no moving forward or backward has occurred in the holy Quran. Also, nothing in the Quran has been added, nor has anything been omitted from it, and I seek refuge in Allah from those who believe in such distortions. Such beliefs will allow distortion to find its way into the miracle of the holy Prophet (s) which has been transmitted in succession."

6– Al Muhaqiq Al Karaki

Al Muhaqiq Al Karaki who is famously known as Al Muhaqiq Al Thani, deceased in the year 940 A.H, has written a treatise on the rejection of distortion in the Quran in which he says:

"The narrations that indicate that there are omissions in the Quran must either be justified or thrown away, because if a narration is contrary to proofs, books and successive customs, and it is not possible to justify it, that narration must be taken out of the circle."

7– Al Hurr Al Ameli

Sheikh Mohammad ibn Hasan famously known as Al Hurr Al Ameli, is among the famous scholars who have voiced explicitly their views on the non-existence of distortion in the Quran. He has said:

"By examining the traditions and investigating history and the Hadiths, certain knowledge on the highest possible level of the succession of the Quran is achieved and thousands of the companions of the Prophet (s) were the recitors and memorisors of the Quran. Also it is certain that the holy Quran was gathered and written down in the time of the Prophet (s)."

8– The martyr Qazi Nurrullah Tustari

Qazi Nurrullah Tustari was martyred in the year 1019 A.H and his grave is in India. He strived hard to revive the Shiite doctrine, and finally, put his life into it and was martyred. In his book, *Masaeb Al-Nawasib Fil Imamah wal Kalam*, he says:

"Shias have been accused of saying a change has occurred in the Quran. This saying is not the general belief of the Imamiyah and only a small group refers to it. Their saying is not really worth paying attention to."

The above were reported examples. For further evidence, we shall name some other Shia scholars and erudites who have strongly rejected distortion in the Quran. These people are: Sayed ibn Tawoos, Ibn Idris, Sayed Radhi, Fadhel Jawad, Muhaqiq Ardabili, Sheikh Tabarsi, Mulla Fathullah Kashani, the author of *Manhaj u Sadeqin*, Sheikh Bahae', Feydh Kashani, Allamah Majlesi, Sayed Bahr ul Ulum, Sheikh Ja'far famously known as Kashif al Ghetta, etc.

The non-existence of distortion in the Quran according to contemporary scholars

Some of the contemporary scholars have discussed the non-existence of distortion in the Quran in detail and with annotations. We shall point out some of them.

The late Allamah Balaghi

He has discussed the non-existence of distortion in the Quran in the introduction of his commentary on the Quran, *Ala' Al Rahman*.

Allamah Tabatabaei

He has has strongly rejected distortion in the Quran in several chapters of *Al Mizan*, following the verse:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ﴾

"Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it."[1]

Imam Khomeini

In his lessons on the principles of jurisprudence, while discussing the authority of the apparent (exoteric) meaning of the Quran, he has strongly blasted those who believe in distortion in the Quran and said:

"Some say there was a verse on the leadership in the Quran that has been deleted. This saying is in no way correct because if there was actually such a thing, Imam Ali (a) must have used it as a reason at least once and read the leadership verse while confronting his

1. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15, verse 9.

adversaries, whereas, we have not come across any case in which he has adhered to such a thing. He repeatedly pointed at the Ghadir event, and the verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤۡتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمۡ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down."[1]

In addition, no one has seen the leadership verse used as an argument in *Nahj Al Balagha*, nor in any of his sayings, or mentioned during debates with the companions, saying that there was a verse in the holy Quran which they had deleted. Thus, it is clear that there was no such verse. If there was such a thing, the pure infallible Imams (a) would have pointed it out at some place."

Ayatollah Khoei

He has a detailed discussion regarding distortion in the Quran, in the introduction of *Al Bayan,* in which he strongly rejects and denies distortion in the Quran.

Up to now, we reported the sayings of some of the great Shia scholars of the past and present century and nearly all the books which we reported on the non- existence of distortion in Quran are available.You can refer to them and also refer to the opposing side.

The fairness of one Sunni scholar

The late Ayatollah Sharaf Al Din Al Ameli quotes from a Sunni scholar who he remembers as *Imam Al Hindi*,[2] who has in his book, *Izhar Al Haq*, judged the Shia fairly and spoken about the slanders againt them:

"To the majority of the Ithna Ashari Shias, the holy Quran is safe and protected from change and transformation and if any Shia believes in

1. *Surah al-Ma'edah,* Chapter 5, verse 55.
2. Al Sheikh Rahmatullah Al Hindi [Trans].

the presence of shortcomings in the holy Quran, his saying is unacceptable and rejected by the majority of Shias."

Imam Hindi then uses the sayings of the famous Shia scholars and erudites, like Sadooq, Sayyed Murtadha, Tabarsi, Al Hurr Al Ameli and other Shia luminary scholars as evidence, and says:

"Thus, it is clear that the Ithna Ashari Imamiyah scholars believe that the holy Quran that was revealed by Allah (swt) to the Prophet (s) is the one in the hands of Muslims today, and has not been changed. This Quran is the same as the Quran at the time of the Prophet (s), that was memorised and transmitted by thousands of the Prophet's (s) companions. And at the time of the reappearance of Imam Zaman (a), this very Quran with its present arrangement will be enforced. The saying of those few who consider distortion in the holy Quran is rejected and their statements are disregarded."

He then adds:

"Among the scholars who reject distortion in the Quran are: Sheikh Al Taefah (Sheikh Tousi), Feydh Kashani, Al Hurr Al Ameli, and Allamah Majlesi. Nonwithstanding, these very scholars have included some traditions in their books, which indicate distortion in the Quran; for example, in the books: *Tahdhib, Wafi, Wasael, Bihar* etc…"

We also admire Imam Hindi for observing fairness and stating the essence of the matter. This is actually the case. The majority of Shia scholars and erudites believe that the Quran has not been distorted and those who have the view of distortion in the Quran are only a few and the saying of a few people cannot be ascribed to the whole Ithna Ashari Imamiyah sect.

Imam Hindi's saying that: "Even though some Shia scholars consider the non existence of distortion in the Quran, they have reported some narrations in their books that exoterically denote distortion in the Quran." We will say that merely reporting the narrations is not a reason for saying the author believes in those narrations.

A glance at the narrations on distortion

A. Shia books

We shall now answer the question why the Shia scholars have reported narrations that indicate distortion in the Quran when they do not believe in them.

We must bear in mind that the books of tradition fundamentally differ from books of theology and the principles of jurisprudence. Collecting all narrations and traditions, whether valid, reliable, trustworthy or weak, is not at all a reason to believe the collector believes in what he has collected. There are conditions on believing and relying on the indications of narrations, which are as follows:

A) The evidence of narration must be valid. If it is faulty, it cannot be accepted,

B) If a narration is incomplete in fully indicating the meaning, it cannot possible be accepted.

C) If there is a narration contradicting another narration for which the evidence is valid and the indication is complete, it is not possible to say that the person mentioning this narration in his book, believes it.

D) The content of the narration must not have a single transmitter *(Khabar eWahid)* for it to be believed.

Thus, the conclusion is that reporting one or several narrations in a book does not at all indicate that the author of the book believes in the content of that narration.

Collectors of traditions can be divided into three groups:

First group: Those who have gathered traditions that apparently indicate distortion in the Quran and do not believe in the content and subject of that tradition either because of weak evidence or some other reasons; for example, Sheikh Tousi, Al Hurr Al Ameli, Majlesi and Feydh Kashani. Even though these people have gathered those narrations in their books, they have rejected them.

Second group: Those who have not mentioned their rejection or approval of these narrations, Sheikh Kolayni is one of them who has reported narrations on this ground in his book, *Al Kafi,* but has not rejected or verified them.

Third group: Those who have reported the narrations and believe in them, such as Haji Noori, the author of the book *Fasl Al Khitab.*

None of the great traditionalists are in this group.

B. The Sunni books

If a Sunni asks you why your scholars have reported the narration on distortion in the Quran in their books, you can say that say that the great Sunni scholars have also reported narrations in their books of tradition that indicate distortion in the Quran. These narrations are mentioned in the most valid Sunni books, such as *Musnad Ahmad, Sahih Muslim, Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Tirmidhi, Dar Qutni.* If mere reporting of traditions is a reason for the belief of its narrator, then we must say that the Sunni scholars also believe in distortion in the Quran since they have reported the distortion narrations. This is not so. The Sunnis consider non-existence of distortion in the Quran and have explicitly said this in their commentaries and other books.

The misuse of titles of some chapters in Usul Kafi

It is worthwhile to mention that those who say Shias believe in distortion in the Quran, is because they are misled by the following title of a chapter in this book:

"The whole Quran was collected by the pure Imams (a) and they truly have the knowledge of the whole Quran" [1]

They assume that the Quran gathered by the pure Imams is more than the Quran in the hands of people today and no one has gathered the Quran the way they have, whereas, none of the narrations that are mentioned indicate this. Some of these narrations say that no one but a liar can claim that he has compiled the Quran in the same manner, and, according to the order it was revealed, because no one has

1. ﴿وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَٱلۡمَلَكُ صَفّٗا صَفّٗا﴾

compiled the Quran in the order it was revealed except Ali ibn Abi Talib (a). Certainly, there is an explicit and clear difference between these two sayings.

Some narrations in this chapter also say that no one can claim that the exoteric and esoteric meanings of the Quran are all with him, except for the *Ausiyah* (the legatees) of the Messenger of Allah (s).

It is said in another tradition:

"Verily, a part of the knowledge given to us is the science of commentary and rulings of the Quran."

Or: "I know the book of Allah from the beginning to the end and apparently all of it is in the palm of my hand."

Or:

"I swear to Allah, the knowledge of the whole Quran is with us."

And by observing the traditions in this chapter, it becomes clear that none of these traditions indicate distortion or any damage to the Quranic verses. However, it is possible to perceive such an understanding from the title of this chapter.

Also in this book, there are narrations that indicate distortion in the Quran. However, the majority of them include the commentary or interpretation of a part of the revelations. It has been assumed that the mentioned sentences in these narrations were a part of the Quran that were deleted. In the future discussions, we shall point to some of these traditions.

The significance of reciting the Quran

It is necessary and rather an obligation on all Muslims to not let any distortion occur in the Quran and the requisite for this act is reading the Quran regularly, and contemplating and reflecting on it.

If this is not done, it is possible that the holy Quran gets changed and distorted by foreigners, enemies of Islam and those with no faith. Surly, it is a pleasure to know that Allah has promised:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ﴾

"Indeed We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it."[1]

However, as Muslims, we also have a duty. As you know, everything we have is from the holy Quran; unity, justice, prophethood, leadership, resurrection, guidance, morals, the attributes of Allah, the divine rulings, etc. When all that we possess is from the Quran, then we must study the Quran in-depth, since it is one of the two weighty valuable things that the Prophet (s) has advised us to hold on to. The other weighty thing is the pure and infallible Ahlul- Bayt (a).

It is very important to seriously read and study the commentary of the Quran so that you are able to confront those who have learnt the Quran because of corrupt intentions or ignorantly. Those who interpret the Quran for their own benefit, define and interpret it in such a way that it corrupts people and makes them go astray.

Unfortunantly, some people only spend time reciting the Quran with emphasis on its points of articulation (*makhraj al-alfâdh)*, and neglect the meaning and commentary in the Quran. This displeasing situation was also present in the time of Imam Baqir (a). He wrote to Sad Al Khayr:

"One of the acts people have abandoned is the meaning of the holy Quran. They only observe its letters. They have distorted the boundaries of the Quran. They narrate the Quran, but do not act upon it. The ignorant and the unenlightened are pleasantly surprised when some people read the Quran with a good voice and some recite it from memory. They exclaim: 'How beautifully they recite the Quran!' However, scholars are worried about the fact that people do not act upon the Quran but put great effort in presenting it."

The situation is the same in our time. Nowadays, great attention is paid to the pronounciation and reciting of the Quran and none to its meaning, commentary and comprehension. It is our duty to revive the importance of the Quran and ensure that the endeavour towards reflection on the Quran must be more than on its words and quality of

1. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15, verse 9.

recitation. Surely, we do not deny the importance of reading the Quran well, however, this should not surpass reflecting on its wisdom.

It is said explicitly in the holy Quran:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَآ﴾

"Do they not contemplate the Qur'an, or are there seals on their hearts?"[1]

The holy Quran must be treated as the essence of life and used all the time. It must not only be recited during mourning ceremonies or over the grave and then closed and placed on the shelf. If God forbid, we get into such a situation, we will give the enemies of Islam and the Quran an opportunity to achieve their objective.

Alhamdullilah! As a blessing of the Islamic revolution of Iran and the leadership of Imam Khomeini, the Quran and its commandments have slowly entered the lives of people and achieved considerable importance and position all over the world, and is illuminating hearts. We hope that a day comes soon when the teachings of the Quran illuminate the whole world. Inshallah

1. *Surah Mohammad*, Chapter 47, verse 24.

Types of distortion in the Quran

There are several types of distortion, some of which we shall point out here:

1– Distortion in words

Distortion in words or terms of the Quran is when a word has been replaced by another word; for example, *Hakim* instead of *Alim* or vice versa. This type of distortion has not been claimed by any of the Shia or Sunni scholars.

Only ibn Masoud regarded changing the word to its synonym in pronounciation permissible, because the meaning would not change. But, if the word that has been revealed is changed to another word, what is recited will not be the word used by Allah. The words of divine sayings must also be retained. Permission for this act is not included in distortion and no one has claimed that some of the words in Quran have been transformed and changed.

2– Distortion in meaning

That is, no change or transformation has occurred to the words. However, the meaning of the content has changed. In other words, "semantical distortion" takes place when words are perceived as something other than their real or topical meaning, just as the Jews semantically distorted the words of Allah (swt) in many cases, interpreting and explicating it as they desired. Interpretation and explication according to ones own views and desires is also possible in the case of the Quran, and this kind of distortion has not been denied and rejected by anyone. Among the interpreters and non interpreters, there were numerous people who interpreted and explicated the Quran in accordance with their own intentions and objectives.

Samaratu ibn Jundab and distortion in the Quran

One of the people, who boldly distorted the Quran to achieve his political ambitions and make Mu'awiyah happy, was Samaratu ibn Jondab. :

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَشۡرِي نَفۡسَهُ ٱبۡتِغَآءَ مَرۡضَاتِ ٱللَّهِۗ وَٱللَّهُ رَءُوفُۢ بِٱلۡعِبَادِ﴾

"And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most kind to [His] servants.."[1]

The noble verse 's specific referent was Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a). but with the utmost insolence, he placed *Ibn Muljam Al Moradi,* the world's most wretched and damned man, as the referent of this noble verse. Next, he made Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a) the referent of this verse:

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يُعۡجِبُكَ قَوۡلُهُۥ فِي ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَا وَيُشۡهِدُ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلۡبِهِۦ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ ٱلۡخِصَامِ﴾

"Among the people is he whose talk about worldly life impresses you, and he holds Allah witness to what is in his heart, though he is the staunchest of enemies."[2]

Samara interpreted and defined these verses thus, so that he should not be deprived of the gifts and blessings of Mua'wiyah.

Political groups and distortion in the Quran

Among those who tried and still try to interpret the Quran according to their own wishes and desires, are the political groups. Some political groups in Iran also, before the Islamic revolution and after it, tried to modify the Quranic verses according to their objectives and intentions which was an extremely horrifying act that had horrifying consequences.

However, Imam Khomeini (May he reside in Allah's paradise), squashed them and did not let them achieve their dangerous

1. *Surah Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 207.
2. *Surah Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 204.

objectives. After he came to Iran, he persisted in his attacks against these kinds of political currents. The revolution and the role of the clergy vanquished those political currents and, *Alhamdollilah*, they were fully annihilated and destroyed. If those currents were to endure, those interpretations and distortions would have continued and dangerously affected our youth.

The issue of distortion existed and it still exists, and all the divine Prophets (a), as part of their duties, fought these dangerous distortions. One of our duties must also be to fight them, for which we must first become scholars and scientists and be completely familiar with the Quran and its commentory, and also endeavour to train and teach worthy students.

This form of interpretation is called *Al Tafsiru be Ra'ay* or interpreting the Quran according to subjective opinion. It was these subjective interpretations of the Quran that caused many tragedies throughout the history of Islam.

3– Conventional distortion

The third type of distortion is conventional distortion. The meaning of conventional distortion is that the present order of the verses and chapters are not according to the order of revelation, and certainly and definitely, conventional distortion has occurred in the holy Quran and all the Islamic sects accept and agree to it. This is because the Prophet (s) started inviting people to Islam in Mecca and the Meccan verses were revealed to him. He then migrated to Madina where the Medinite verses were revealed to him. Thus, the Meccan verses must come before the Medinite verses. But, it is not so. The Medinite verses come before the Meccan verses, just as the first verses revealed to the Prophet (s), in Surah *Alaq,* should be at the beginning of the Quran but are not. Thus we conclude that the present arrangement of the holy Quran is not in accordance to the order of its revelation.

The Quran of Ali (a)

The Prophet (s) in his will, ordered Ali (a) to compile the Quran. And according to the will of the Prophet (s), Ali (a) stayed at home and started compiling the Quran. He did this according to the revelation of

the noble verses. As reported in *Tabaqat* by Ibn Sad, Imam Ali (a) said:

"I swear to Allah (swt) no verse was revealed but I knew for what reason it was revealed and where it was revealed and about whom it was revealed."

And again he said:

"Ask me about the book of Allah (swt). There is not a verse but I know whether it was revealed during the night or day, in the flat desert or on a mountain."

However, the Quran that Ali (a) compiled was handed down to the pure infallible Imams (a) until it reached the noble hands of the *Wali Asr*, Imam e Zaman (a).

We see that the Quran starts with longer chapters and ends with the smaller ones. Surely, it is possible to see that this change, moving forward or backward, has occurred for some of the verses but such change has not caused the slightest damage to the Quran. *The Prophet (s) ordered this arrangement, possibly for some benefit, considering that it was gathered at the time of the Prophet (s).*

4– Distortion by addition

Apparently, all Muslims believe that nothing has been added to the present Quran. That is, no one has claimed that a verse or a chapter has been added to the Quran which was not present in it at the time of the Prophet (s). Only Ibn Masood believes that there are two chapters in the Quran that were not there in the time of the Prophet (s) and were added after the demise of the Prophet (s). These two chapters are *Al-Falaq* and *Al-Nas*. Surely, this claim by ibn Masood is a baseless one and there is no strong and solid evidence to support it.

I must also say about "*Bismillah Ar Rahman Ar Rahim*" that all Shia scholars believe that Bismillah is s part of the Quran and a part of every chapter. However, Sunnis disagree on this. Some of them including Malik, Owzaei, Da'ud and Abu Hanifah have said: "*Bismillah* is neither a part of Surah Fatiha nor any other Surah. It is only read for the sake of blessedness and to separate two chapters, but

it is not read at the beginning of Fatiha, and reading it in prayer is undesirable."

Another group considered it to be a part of Quran and a part of every Surah in the Quran. However, the Shias regard it a part of the chapter and thus, when in prayer, they recite *Surah Ikhlas*, they count *Bismillah* as a part of the chapter.

In any case, what is certain and definite is that distortion by addition has not occurred in the Quran and there is consensus on this matter among Muslims.

5– Distortion by omission

The fifth and the last type of distortion is *distortion by omission*. Some believe that there was a verse in the Quran that was deleted during the time of the caliphs. Belief in this type of distortion is ascribed to Shias saying that they believe that distortion and omission in the Quran has taken place, and intentionally propagate this slander. We have recounted the sayings of the great Shia scholars in this regard and proved that they believe that neither addition nor any omission has occurred in the Quran and only a group of Shia traditionalists believe in this form of distortion in the Quran. The response to these will be given in future sessions.

Distortion according to the Sunnis

The shortcoming and omission in the Quran has been ascribed to a large number of the Prophet's (s) companions. Some of them are: Omar Ibn Khattab, Uthman ibn Afwan, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Abdullah ibn Omar, Abd Al Rahman Ouf, Abi ibn Kab, Abdullah ibn Masood, Zeid ibn Thabit, Abu Musa Ashari, Hadhiqa tul Yaman, Jabir ibn Abdullah, Ayesha bint Abu Bakar and others. From among the prominent ones of the *Tabieen* (the generation after the companions of the Prophet -s-), Akaramatu Al Dhahak and Sa'id ibn Mosayyed also believe this.

The traditions that clearly indicate distortion and fault in the Quran have come in the most important and valid Sunni books, including *Kitab Motta'*, *Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sahih Tirmidhi, Sahih Nisaee, Sunan ibn Majeh, Musnad Ahmad, Mustadrak Hakim, Sunan Beyhaqi, Kanzul Ummal, Tabari commentary, Qurtabi commentary, Ibn Kathir commentary, Kashaf, etc.*

Based on the narrations and traditions on distortion, the Sunni scholars have been divided into three groups:

A) Some of them have only reported the distortion narrations in their books and have not expressed any views on them. Thus, it is not clear whether they regarded these narrations correct and believed in them or have just mentioned them.

B) Some of them explicitly believe that distortion has occurred in the Quran and regard the narrations on distortion as correct and valid. This saying has been ascribed to *Al Hashuyah* by the Sunnis. *Al Hashuyah* are the companions of *Abu Al Hasan Basri* who regard the exoteric appearance of the Quran to be proof, even if it explicitly contradicts wisdom.

C) Some have mentioned the traditions in their books and have undertaken their responsibility and said; "Whatever we have written in our books is correct and valid, and we are certain about them being from the Prophet (s) and the companions." Those who believe this

saying are: Malik ibn Anas in the book *Mot'a*; Ahmad ibn Hanbal in the *Musnad, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and Nisaee*; Ibn Majeh in his *Sahih*; Hakim Neyshaburi in the *Mustadrak*; Tabari in his *commentary*, and others. The third group either believes in distortion in the Quran or interprets and justifies the traditions on distortion.

The traditions that indicate deletion of some verses and chapters of theQuran

"It has been reported from Ibn 'Abbas that Omar said in a speech: "Truly Allah delegated Mohammad and revealed the book to him. The lapidation (*Rajm*) verse was among what was revealed to him. We recited and memorised the lapidation verse and the Prophet (s) used to lapidate (stoning to death). We also lapidated after him and I am afraid that after a long time, a speaker says: 'We did not find the lapidation verse in the Quran,' and they go astray by abandoning the canonical obligation (*Faridhah*) that Allah (swt) has revealed. Thus lapidation is right for the one who commits adultery from among the married men and women and when there is evident testimony, like the woman becomes pregnant or confesses. I swear to Allah (swt), if they would not have said that Omar has added to the book of Allah (swt) I would have written it down."

This tradition has been narrated with a slight difference in some of the terms in Musnad Ahmad, Sahih Muslim and Bukhari and Sunan Tirmidhi and Mut'a Malik and Sunan ibn Majeh and Sunan Daremi.

It is said in the Nawawi commentaries on *Sahih Muslim*:

"The objective of the lapidation verse is this verse: when the old man and women commit adultery, they must definently be lapidated."

He then justifies it by saying this verse was abrogated but its wisdom still remains.

2– It has also been reported that Omar Ibn Khattab said:

"We used to read the verse "*La targhabu Aan Abaekom…*" in the Quran, which meant: 'Do not turn away from your father, as turning away from your fathers is polytheism."

3– The following verse is from *Surah Bayennah* in the *Al Darr Al Manthur* commentary, which Ahmad and Tirmidhi and Hakim quote from Abi ibn Kab:

"The Messenger of Allah (s) said: 'Allah (swt) ordered me to recite this verse to you (Abi ibn Kab):

﴿لَمۡ يَكُنِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنۡ أَهۡلِ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ حَتَّىٰ تَأۡتِيَهُمُ ٱلۡبَيِّنَةُ﴾

"Faithless from among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not set apart until the proof had come to them."[1]

The Prophet (s) then also read these sentences in that verse: 'If the son of Adam, seeks a desert of worldly wealth, I shall give it to him. If he asks for a second or a third desert, it is because nothing fills the stomach of the son of Adam other than dust. But Allah (swt) accepts the repentance of everyone, and truly, the real religion with Allah (swt) is the *Hanif* religion (Pure Islamic monotheist), not polytheism, Judiasm or Christianity; and whoever converts to this religion, will not express polytheism."

Ahmad also quotes Abi ibn Kab saying:

"The Messenger of Allah (s) told me: 'Allah (swt) ordered me to recite the verse:

﴿لَمۡ يَكُنِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنۡ أَهۡلِ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ حَتَّىٰ تَأۡتِيَهُمُ ٱلۡبَيِّنَةُ ۝١ رَسُولٞ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ يَتۡلُواْ صُحُفٗا مُّطَهَّرَةٗ ۝٢ فِيهَا كُتُبٞ قَيِّمَةٞ ۝٣ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا جَآءَتۡهُمُ ٱلۡبَيِّنَةُ ۝٤﴾

*"Faithless among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not set apart until the proof had come to them;*an apostle from Allah, reciting impeccable scriptures,*wherein are upright writings;*and those who were given the Book did not divide, except after the proof had come to them."*[2]

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1. *Surah al-Bayennah*, Chapter 98, verse 1.

2. *Surah al-Bayennah*, Chapter 98, verse 1-4.

After reading those verses, the Prophet (s) added]: 'The true religion with Allah is the *Hanif* religion (Pure Islamic monotheist), not polytheism, or Judaism or Christianity; and whoever converts to this religion, will not express polytheism."

Sho'bah says: "The Prophet (s) then recited the next verses, and after that he read: 'If the son of Adam owns two deserts…..' Then the Prophet (s) recited the rest of the verses and finished the chapter."

If these two traditions that have been reported from Ibn Abi Kab and the Sunni scholars like Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and Hakim have approved the first tradition as a correct tradition then verses were deleted from *Surah Bayennah*. Surely there are differences in the wording of these verses in the two traditions. The sentence of Abi ibn Kab says that the Prophet (s) recited these sentences in *Surah Bayennah.*

In other narrations the sentence, "If the son of Adam…" have been reported as Quranic verses:

A) In *Muntakhab Kanz Al Aamal*, it is said in the footnotes of *Musnad* Ahmad ibn Hanbal that Ibn 'Abbas said:

"I was with Omar and recited, '*If the son of Adam owns…*' Omar then said: 'What is this?' I said: 'This is how Obay ibn Kab recited it to me.' Omar then went to Obay ibn Kab and asked him about it. He said: 'This is how the Messenger of Allah (s) recited it to me.'"

This tradition is reported from Ibn 'Abbas with a slight difference in *Al Darr Al Manthur* commentary and it says that Omar said: 'Hence! Should I record this in the Quran?' Obay ibn Kab replied: 'Yes.'

B) It is reported in another narration from Ibn 'Abbas that he told Omar: "Oh, Master of the faithful! Truly Obay ibn Kab thinks that you abandoned a verse from the verses of Allah and did not write in in the *Mus'haf* (the Quran)." Omar said: "I swear to Allah I will ask Obay and if he denies it, you have lied." Thus, after the morning prayers, he went to Obay. Obay then gave him permission and placed a mat on the floor for him and Omar told him what Ibn 'Abbas had said. Obay then said: "I truly heard the Messenger of Allah say: '*If the son of Adam owns…*' until the end. Omar then said: "Shall I write this down? "Obay said: "I will not prohibit you from it." Ibn 'Abbas

says: Apparently, Obay hesitated, wondering whether this was the sentence of the Prophet (s) or the Quran that was revealed."

4– One of the chapters of the holy Quran is *Al-Ahzhab*. This chapter has seventy three verses. However, the narrations in Sunni books say this chapter had more verses. This is what Orwah ibn Zobair quotes from Ayesha about *Al- Ahzhab*:

"When *Al-Ahzhab* was recited in the time of the Prophet (s), it had two hundred verses. However, when Uthman wrote it, he could not find more than what is present today."

Again, Suyuti quotes from Obay ibn Kab, through various means, in *Al-Darr Al-Manthur* that he says: '*Al Ahzhab* was equal or maybe more that *Surah Baqarah*.'

There are other narrations reported for this case:

"Ahmad ibn Hanbal reports from Zarr ibn Jaysh that Obay ibn Kab said: 'How much do you recite *Surah Al Ahzhab*?' [How many verses does it have], Zarr said: 'Seventy three verses.' Obay ibn Kab said: 'Not at all. I truly saw that it was equal to *Surah Baqarah* and had the *Rajm* verse in it.' Zarr says: 'Which is the *Rajm* verse?' He replied: 'The old man and the old women…..(till the end).'"

Hakim quotes in Mustadrak from Obay ibn Kab that he said: "*Surah Al- Ahzhab* was equal to *Surah Baqarah* and in it was the verse 'When the old man and women commit adultery, they must definitely be lapidated."

5– There are also narrations in Sunni books that denote a fault in *Surah Al Towbah*:

A) Suyuti has reported, through various means, from Hudhayqatu ibn Al Yaman, that he said: 'You are only reciting a quarter of what we used to recite of *Surah Towbah*."

B) It is also quoted from Hudhayqah that he said: "What you recite is a third of this Surah."

C) In another place, it has been quoted from Malik ibn Anas that: "*Surah Towbah* was equal (in number of verses) to *Surah Baqarah,* and the beginning of it was deleted and Bismillah was also among the verses that were deleted."

6– Jalal Al Din reports that Suyuti said: "We have been told that a group of the Prophet's (s) companions who were also Quran recitors were attacked by the enemies on the day of *Musilamah* and as a consequences, some letters of the Quran were destroyed."

7– Suyuti says: "Tabrani has reported from Omar ibn Khattab that: 'The Quran was a thousand thousand of letters and twenty seven thousand letters."

Then he says: "The men of transmission of this tradition, except Tabrani, are trustworthy."

The content of this tradition is that the Quran had one million and twenty seven thousand letters, whereas, the number of the letters in the Quran we have today is about a third of this. Thus, the rest must have been deleted.

8– Ibn Abi Da'ud and Ibn Al Anbari have reported that Ibn Shahab said: "We were told that a substantial Quran had been revealed and the scholars that had memorised it were killed on the *Yamamah* day. However, not a lot of it was remembered after them and also not written."

9– It has been reported from Ayesha in *Sunan Ibn Majeh* that:

"The adult verses on *Rajm* (lapidation) and *Ridha'* (breastfeeding) were revealed ten times and these two verses were under my bed. When the Prophet (s) passed away we were busy mourning his loss and a house animal entered and ate it."

It is reported in *Sahih Muslim* and *Sunan Daremi* from Ayesha that:

"This verse was revealed in the Quran: 'Feeding from the breast on ten occasions is unlawful,' and it was abrogated later and replaced by 'five occasions', and after the Prophet (s) passed away these verses of the Quran were deleted."

The requisite for this saying is that both the abrogative and the abrogated must have been deleted from the Quran. Since at the moment, none of these two, feeding from the breast on ten occasions or five, are present in the Quran. Surely, they say that the recitation of these verses was abrogated (*Mansukhu Tilawah*) and taken out of the Quran by Allah (swt). We shall discuss abrogation in recitation later.

10– It is reported, through various means, that there were two *Surahs* by the neame *Khala'* and *Hafd* in the Quran copy of *Ibn 'Abbas* and *Obay ibn Kab*, and now those two *Surahs* are not in the present Quran and have been deleted.

This is how Suyuti reports these two *Surahs*:

"O Allah! We seek Your help and ask for Your forgiveness. And praise You and not express ingratitude, and despise those who are rebellious towards You. Allah! We only worship You and pray and prostrate for You and strive and serve in the way that leads towards You, and are hopeful of Your mercy and fearful of the punishement that will join us to the pagans (polytheists)."

Apparently, in the event of the correctness of the mentioned traditions, this was the supplication that the Messenger of Allah (s) read in the *Qunut* (Supplication in Salat) and these were not two chapters from the Quran.

11– Masur ibn Makharmah has narrated that Omar told Abd Al Rahman ibn Ouf:

"Did you not come across a verse in the Quran that says: 'Strive (in the cause of Allah) the way you first strived (in the cause of Allah)? I cannot find it.' Abd Al Rahman Ouf said: 'That verse was deleted.'"

12– Abu Harb ibn Abi Al Aswad reports that his father said: Abu Musa called the Quran-recitors of Basra and three hundred of them came, all reciting the Quran. Abu Musa said: 'You are the great men and Quran-recitors of Basra, Recite the Quran…' 'We read a *Surah* the length and strength of which we likened to *Surah Towbah*. However, I forgot that *Surah* and only knew this part of it: "*If the son of Adam owns two deserts of worldly wealth, he will seek the third desert, and this is because nothing other than dust fills the stomach of the son of Adam*." We also read a *Surah* which we likened to one of the Laudings but I forgot that also and only remembered this part of it: 'Oh you who believe! Why do you not act upon what you say……?'"

The mentioned cases are examples of the narrations that are present in famous Sunni books. The summary of these cases is as follows:

Deletion of the following verses:

a) Verse on*Rajm*

b) Verse on *Ridha*

c) A verse from *Surah Bayennah*

d) One hundred and twenty seven verses from *Surah Al- Ahzhab*, or according some narrations, *Surah Al- Ahzhab* was equal or more than *Surah Baqarah*, when only seventy three of its verses have remained.

e) Only a third or a quarter of *Surah Towbah* is being recited, and in some narrations it is considered to be the same in length as *Surah Baqarah*.

f) The whole of the Quran consisted of one million and twenty seven thousand letters, the third of which remains today.

g) Two *Surahs* in the Quran called *Khala'* and *Hafd* have been deleted.

h) There was a *Surah* equal in length and strength to *Surah Towbah* which was later forgotten.

i) There was a *Surah* similar to the Laudation (*Musabahat*) *Surahs (Yusabi hu lillah)* and has been forgotten and only one verse of it has remained: "*Ya Ayu hal Ladhina Amanu limah Taquloona mala Tafaloon.*"

j) There was a verse on Jihad: "Strive like you strived the first time", and now it is not in the Quran and has been deleted.

k) In the Quran there was a verse "ten times feeding from breasts is unlawful" and it was abrogated to "five times feeding from breasts is unlawful", and it was recited until the Prophet (s) was alive and was a part of the Quran, but was deleted after the Prophet (s).

For more information, refer to books that have discussed the Quran sciences such as *Al Itqan* written by Jalal Adin Suyuti Shafe'i, volume 2; page 25, old version, and *Al Baray* by Ayatollah Khoei.

What have the Sunni brothers got to say regarding these narrations? How can they accuse the Shia and the Imamiayh of considering distortion in the Quran when their tradition books, resources and references are filled with narrations that indicate distortion in the

Quran, and some explicitly say that whatever they have reported in their books is correct and has definitely been issued by the Prophet (s) and the companions?

No Shia scholars or common people believe in deletions of verses equal to *Surah Baqarah*. They have not reported any narrations in this regard that are present in Shia books. What they have said about *Surah Al- Ahzhab, and Surah Towbah,* up to now, has not been reported by any Shia; or that the verses on any one of the rulings, or a *Surah* from the *Surahs* in the Quran that was recited at the time of the Prophet (s), has been deleted.

Those Sunni people who consider distortion in the Quran are as follows: Omar ibn Khattab, Ayesha, Abd Al Rahman ibn Ouf, Obay ibn Kab, Abu Musa Ashari, Malik ibn Anas, and other famous Sunni scholars such as: Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nisaee, Ibn Majeh, Hakim, Tabari and others have reported these narrations. They have said that whatever we have brought in these books is correct and valid, be it the saying on distortion or interpreting these narrations.

However, the great Shia scholars; for example, Sheikh Sadooq, Sheikh Mufid, Seyed Murtadha, Sheikh Tousi, Allamah Helli, Al Muhaqiq Al Karaki and Sheikh Al Hurr Al Ameli and other have strongly rejected the sayings on distortion and considered them null. We pointed to these sayings earlier. Only a minor group of the traditionalists considered the omission of a verse on leadership, which has been objected to by the scholars, and books have been written on their rejection and the traditionalists have been sorely criticised and scolded.

Some of the Sunnis by the name *Hashuyah* compeletly freed themselves because they were the followers of Abu Al Hasan Basri, and considered the exoteric meanings of the Quran and narrations as proof. This sect believes that according to the appearances of the noble narrations and traditions, distortion has occurred in the Quran. Their sayings on distortion have been ascribed to a group of theologians in the book, "*I'jaz Al Quran.*"

Justification of the narrations of distortion by Sunni scholars

Distinguished Sunni scholars like Malik ibn Anas, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Muslim, Bukhari and Nesaee have reported the narrations of distortion in their books and explicitly said that whatever they have reported is correct and definitely issued (by the Prophet (s) or the companions). However, **because they do not want to accept distortion in the Quran, they found the solution in** justifying the narrations and at the same time **saying that the recitation and reading of those verses had been abrogated.**

Types of Abrogation

They have mentioned three types of abrogations:

1– The ruling of the noble verse is abrogated but its recitation remains legal and correct.

2– The ruling remains but the recitation is abrogated. For example,the recitation of the verse on *Rajm* has been abrogated but its ruling still remains.

3– Both the recitation and ruling have been abrogated. For example, the ruling and recitation of the verse *Al Sheikh va Sheikha*... (The old man and old woman) have been abrogated by the Prophet (s), so,no one should read it or act upon its ruling.

Hazm ibn Andulusi who is one of the Hanbalite scholars says: 'The verse that has the ruling on *Rajm* was revealed. However, its terms have been abrogated but its ruling still remains."

Also Jalal Adin Suyuti says: 'There are many examples of this type and some of the previous cases such as the saying of Ayesha on *Surah Al- Ahzhab*, or what Obay ibn Kab has reported on the two *Surahs, Khala'* and *Hafd*, indicate this. This means he regards their recitation abrogated but their rulings still remain.

Also, ibn Hazm, in *Muhla*, reports the saying of Obay ibn Kab regarding *Surah Al Ahzhab* that this *Surah* was equal in number of verses to *Surah Baqarah,* and regards it of the type of ruling which has been abrogated.

In *Al Itqan* he uses the verse on *Ridha'* that has been quoted from Ayesha. He then says: "Makki said: 'In this example both the abrogated and the abrogative are not recited and this example has none like it.'"

The requisite for this example, as quoted by Makki, is the abrogation of both the abrogative: "five occasions", and the abrogated "ten occations," and neither of them must be recited. Apparently both the words and rulings of ten occasions have been abrogated, however, the words "in five occasions" have been abrogated but the ruling, based on the view and belief of the Sunnis, still remains.

In order to show their non-acceptance of distortion in the Quran, without disagreeing with the narrations reported on distortion in their books, some of the Sunni scholars adopted abrogation-in-recitation similar to what was reported from Ibn Hazm in the previous paragraph, and what Alusi says:

"During the time of Siddiq (Abu Bakar), those parts of the Quran that had not been transmitted successively, or their recitation had not been abrogated, were omitted. However, those who did not know about the abrogation were still reciting them."

On the verse on *Ridha* he says:

"All such cases were abrogated (such as the one on *Ridha'* and as such), as reported by Ibn 'Abbas. The reason for the abrogation of what is in the Ayesha tradition (on *Ridha'*) is that if it had not been abrogated; some of the Quran that had not been abrogated must have then been destroyed, inspite of the fact that Allah (swt) has taken the responsibility of protecting the Quran."

Now the question these scholars need to answer is: 'In what age and time did these abrogations-in-recitation take place? Was it in the time of the Messenger of Allah (s) and done in his presence, or was it after the demise of the Prophet (s) and done by some of the Caliphs? To say abrogation in recitation took place in the time of the Prophet (s) is baseless and there is no evidence to support it, and they cannot prove this. All the scholars agree that it is not possible to prove abrogation with *Khabar Wahid* and a group of scholars have clearly stated this fact in the other books. Even Shafe'i, a majority of his companions, and the majority of the formalists have definite sayings on the fact

that it is not possible to prove the abrogation of Quranic verses even by successive customs.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal believes it is not possible to abrogate verses of the Quran based on successive customs. Those who say it is possible to abrogate verses of the Quran with successive traditions have also admitted that such a thing has not occurred.

So, we ask; How then, is it correct to ascribe the issue of abrogation-in-recitation of the Quran to the Messenger of Allah (s) through these traditions and narrations?'

Ascribing this abrogation-in-recitation to the Messenger of Allah (s) contradicts many of the narrations that say these verses were recited after the Prophet (s) and were a part of the Quran. An example of such narrations:

1– The narration reported on the verse on Rajm:

"If it was not for the saying of people that Omar has added to the Quran, I would have written this down."

This narration well states that in Omar's view, this verse was a part of the Quran and its recitation was not abrogated at the time of the Messenger of Allah (s). If it was, Omar would not have insisted on this verse being a part of the Quran, he would have written it down, because if this verse had been abrogated writing it down in the Quran would not be permissible. Thus Omar's saying clearly states the non-abrogation of the verse on Rajm, and his only barrier from writing this verse is the slander he might receive from people saying he had added it to the Quran.Thus based on the belief and clear statement of Omar, the verse was a part of the Quran after the Prophet (s) and was not abrogated during his time.

Suyuti reports in *Al-Itqan* that Omar brought the verse to Abu Bakar in order to add it to the Quran, but it was not accepted from him since he was the only one reporting it.

It is also clear from the saying of Suyuti that the verse was not abrogated and thus it was brought by Omar to be written after the Messenger of Allah (s), and since it was *Khabar Wahid,* it was not accepted.

2– Ibn Masood wrote the verse "And if man had two deserts…" in his copy of the Quran. If it had been abrogated in the time of the Prophet (s), they would never have written it down in the Quran because this act would not have been permissible. Clearly, this verse was not abrogated in the time of the Messenger of Allah (s).

3– It is reported in *Sahih Muslim* and *Sunan Daremi* that on the verse on *Ridha'*, Ayesha said:

"And the Messenger of Allah (s) passed away while this verse was still being recited."

This saying of Ayesha clearly states that the verse was a part of the Quran after the Messenger of Allah (s) and used to be recited as part of the Quran, which is in contradiction with the abrogation of the verse in the time of the Prophet (s).

4– The content of what Omar narrated to Abd Al-Rahman Ouf is:

"Did you not find the verse, "Strive (in the way of Allah the way you first strived? Truly, we did not find it."

Abd Al-Rahman replied:

"It was among the verses that were deleted from the Quran."

Omar then became silent.

Attention must be paid to the facts that drop outs and deletions are different from abrogations, and it is not possible to justify this narration using abrogation-in- recitation.

5– Suyuti wrote: 'The two chapters *Khal'* and "*Hafd*" were written in the Quran copy of Obay ibn Kab and Ibn 'Abbas which is in contradiction with them being abrogated.

However, if they say abrogation-in-recitation was after the time of the Prophet (s) and in the time of the Caliphs, this would be similar to the sayings on distortion in the Quran.

Fundamentally, abrogation means removing, or in other words, it means Allah had placed a temporary ruling for something. However, He knew it was temporary but we did not. The previous ruling is then abrogated and a second ruling comes and puts an end to the first one. For example, at the beginning, people used to pray towards *Bayt al*

Maqdis. This ruling was later abrogated and *Ka'bah* became the *Qiblah* for Muslims.

Consequently, the abrogation-in-recitation must have first been revealed to the Prophet (s) from Allah (swt) and then the Messenger of Allah (s) would notify the people of it. It has not been reported in any books of narration, Sunni and Shia, that the Prophet (s) said, reciting a certain verse was permitted up to a certain time, but after that its recitation was abrogated and would not be recited. We have not come across any such cases in any books. It is not possible to prove such an important issue with *Khabar Wahid*. Just as proving the verses of the Quran need *Khabar Mutawatir* (tradition narrated by several sources), abrogation-in- recitation of the Quran also needs *Khabar Mutawatir*.

We thus, arrive at the conclusion that these chapters or verses were present in the time of the Prophet (s), either recited or available in the written copies of the Quran. But they were destroyed after the demise of the Prophet (s). Thus scholars like Alusi and others who try to justify this cannot get away with these justifications and interpretations and have to find another way to justify the distortion problem regarding these verses.

The abrogation-in-recitation is baseless

Why should the recitation of words and terms be removed? What is the wisdom in abrogating the recitation of words and terms in the Quran? What does abrogation-in- recitation essentially mean?

The Quran is the Word of Allah (swt) that has been revealed to the Prophet (s). And the reason for calling it the Quran is because it has been revealed with this title as the book of Allah (swt). The question arises: What is the purpose of abrogating the Quranic trait (nature) from the words that have been issued under this title? Is it meant to reject what has taken place, to destroy and remove what has been issued previously? That is impossible, since whatever has taken place in time will not change. The Quranic character of being the Word of Allah (swt) cannot be removed. If the purpose of abrogation-in-recitation is that recitation of these words is no longer permitted and the revalation writers must not write it any more and if they have, they must delete it from their writings. However, their character of

being Quranic and the words of Allah (swt) cannot be removed, but only Quranic rulings do not apply to them (which includes touching without wudu or touching it when in the state of Jinabah (the state of impurity)).

We believe that the words and terms of the Quran are a miracle. What can abrogation-in-recitiation of such verses mean? I seek refuge in Allah (swt) – Are the faithful trying to say that the words and terms of the Quran have a fault and problem and for this reason Allah (swt) has cancelled and forbidden their recitation? In response to the faithful, we firmly say that abrogation-in-recitation is meaningless and there is no acceptable reason for it. There are no transmitted narrations in this regard and it is not possible to consider the recitation of some verses as abrogated and not permissible based on *Khabar Wahid.*

Some of the present Sunni scholars, slightly more enlightend and aware, have totally deny the narrations on abrogation-in- recitation and have said these traditions are baseless and rejected. Men such as Mustafa Zeid and Rafee have admitted and confessed to this reality and said: 'It is not possible to abrogate the recitation of the Quranic verses and the eternal miracle of the Prophet (s) by transmissions that have only one source.'

Here, we shall point to some of these sayings:

1– Ustad Aziz says:

"A group of scholars have denied this form of abrogation (abrogation-in-recitation of verses) and have said it has not taken place in the Quran since this is a fault that is not worthy of the Wise Legislator and contradicts the wisdom of the Most Wise."

If these narrations were correct, these verses would have become famously known to everyone and a large group would have memorised or written them down in their books.

However, no such report has been observed from any one other than the mentioned narrators and thus it is not possible to obtain certainty on the fact that these mentioned verses were written and the revelation writers had written it in the Quran and it was later abrogated and removed from the Quran with their ruling still

remaining (to be acted upon). The other critisicm is that a ruling is not proven without the exact text of the Quran or customs, and the removal of the exact text will cause the removal of the ruling as well. There is no wisdom or benefit or any advantage in merely removing the exact text as long as the ruling still remains and has not been abrogated.

2– Abd Al- Latif famously known as Ibn Al Khatib says:

"One of the most peculiar wonders and causes of astonishment is the claim of those who say some verses of the Quran have been abrogated but their ruling still remains and this is a saying that no wise man will utter. Abrogation of the ruling of some verses with the assumption that their words and recitation still remains, is wise and acceptable. This is because the rulings were gradually revealed. But there is no wisdom or any benefit in abrogating the recitation of a verse while its ruling remains. What would be the wisdom or advantage of a law that is issued by the law maker which is obligatory but they remove the words of that law and destroy it, but, the obligation of acting upon that ruling stays?"

Similar statements to the above have been reported by: Al Sadr Al Shanah in *Al Towdhih;* Abi Ishaq Shirazi in *Al Lam' Fi Osul Al Fiqh*; Sheikh Mohammad Khodri in *Al Tarikh Al Tashri Al Islam*; and Doctor Mustafa Zeid in *Kitab Al Naskh Fi Al Quran Al Karim;* and Doctor Mohammad Sad and others.

However, these writers are trying to deny abrogation-in- recitation when the Quranic words and verses are abrogated but their ruling remains. However, the other form of abrogation in which the words of the verse are abrogated and the ruling is also removed is not included in this reasoning, and is out of their discussion.

Thus, just as proving the Quranic nature of some words and sentences needs firm proofs, removal and abrogation of it also need firm proofs. Among those who have used this reasoning is Doctor Mohammad Sad who says:

"For the sake of abrogation of the exact texts mentioned in these narrations, we are forced to bring two firm reasons, one of which will indicate the proof on the Quranic nature of these exact texts, and the other, the removal of the Quranic character from them. None of these

rulings apply to any of these exact texts. Thus it is not proven that these exact texts are abrogated Quranic verses. Thus to us, this is not correct unless the abrogation is only in the ruling and not the recitation."

Jalal Adin Suyuti has reported from Qazi Abu Bakr Baqilani, the leading poet in Baghdad, in *Al-Intisar* that a group deny abrogation-in-recitation. This is because the traditions transmitted in this regard are those with single narrators *(Khabar Wahid)* and it is not permissible to achieve certainty in abrogation or removal of some verses in the Quran from these."

"Abrogation-in-recitation is when Allah removes a verse from minds and minds forget it, and He orders that they ignore this verse and avoid writing it down so that it becomes old and tattered with the passage of time like the books that existed before. The Quran has also pointed to this:

﴿إِنَّ هَـٰذَا لَفِى ٱلصُّحُفِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ ۝١٨ صُحُفِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ﴾

"This is indeed in the former scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses."[1]

But today, there is nothing available or known about them. This matter has also been reported by Burhan Zarkeshi from Qazi Abu Bakr from *Al Intisar*.

The Imamiyah and the abrogation-in-recitation

The Imamiyah and the followers of the Ja'faria school of thought do not believe in abrogation-in-recitation. The other conclusion is that the Sunnis have more narrations and sayings on distortion and faults in the Quran and the slander they direct towards others more firmly applies to them.

However, there are other justifications and interpretations mentioned for some of these narrations as the words of Allah (swt) but not the Quran, or that part of these narrations have an interpretative and commentary aspect and are not the words of Allah (swt). They are

1. *Surah al-A'la*, Chapter 38, verse 18-19.

rather interpretations by the Messenger of Allah (s) of the words of Allah (swt). However, they have been reported in such a way that they are assumed as words of Allah (swt), such as what was mentioned as the addition to *Surah Bayenah*, which was the commentary of some verses in this chapter and not a part of the chapter.

Reasons for non-distortion of Quran

After clarifying the view of the Shia scholars on distortion, we shall now engage on the reasons of rejecting distortion. Since we do not have time to analyse them all, we shall deal with a part of them:

1– Allah (swt) is the protector of the Quran. It is said in the holy Quran

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ﴾

"Indeed we have sent down the Reminder, and indeed we will preserve it."[1]

What does Allah (swt) mean by protecting the Quran? Does it mean the words or papers that the Quran is written on, or the Quran that certain people have memorized, or a Quran that is with a certain person will be protected, or, this is not what it means, since anything that the Quran is written on is inevitably going to detoriate and perish including the Quran memorizers as well?

Thus the intention of Allah by protecting the Quran is definitely not protecting the Quran that any person wrote or has memorized. What He means is that He will protect and safe guard the verses revealed to the pure heart of the Prophet (s). This is mentioned in:

﴿ٱقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ۝١ خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝٢ ٱقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلْأَكْرَمُ ۝٣ ٱلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ ۝٤ عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝٥ كَلَّآ إِنَّ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ لَيَطْغَىٰٓ ۝٦ أَن رَّءَاهُ ٱسْتَغْنَىٰٓ ۝٧ إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ٱلرُّجْعَىٰٓ ۝٨ أَرَءَيْتَ ٱلَّذِى يَنْهَىٰ ۝٩ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰٓ ۝١٠ أَرَءَيْتَ إِن كَانَ عَلَى ٱلْهُدَىٰٓ ۝١١ أَوْ أَمَرَ بِٱلتَّقْوَىٰٓ ۝١٢ أَرَءَيْتَ إِن

1. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15, verse 9.

كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰٓ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَمۡ يَعۡلَم بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا لَئِن لَّمۡ يَنتَهِ لَنَسۡفَعَۢا بِٱلنَّاصِيَةِ ﴿١٥﴾ نَاصِيَةٖ كَٰذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٖ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلۡيَدۡعُ نَادِيَهُۥ ﴿١٧﴾ سَنَدۡعُ ٱلزَّبَانِيَةَ ﴿١٨﴾ كَلَّا لَا تُطِعۡهُ وَٱسۡجُدۡ وَٱقۡتَرِب ﴿١٩﴾

"Read in the Name of your Lord who created; ¤ created man from a clinging mass. ¤ Read, and your Lord is the most generous, ¤ who taught by the pen, ¤ taught man what he did not know. ¤ Indeed man becomes rebellious ¤ when he considers himself without need. ¤ Indeed to your Lord is the return. ¤ Tell me, he who forbids ¤ a servant when he prays, ¤ tell me, should he be on [true] guidance, ¤ or bid [others] to God wariness, ¤ tell me, should he call him a liar and turn away ¤ does he not know that Allah sees? ¤ No indeed! If he does not stop, We shall seize him by the forelock, ¤ a lying, sinful forelock! ¤ Then let him call out to his gang! ¤ We [too] shall call the keepers of hell. ¤ No indeed! Do not obey him, but prostrate and draw near [Allah]."[1]

This continues up to the last verse of the holy Quran. This very Quran in the hands of people today will be protected and no words or letters will be omitted or added to it. The reason is that after fourteen centuries, no one has yet been able to cause the slightest damage to the holy Quran or change the style and the number of chapters, verses or words, or even its letters, as opposed to what happened to the Torah and Bible which were distorted in a short time after Prophet Musa (a) and Eisa (a) by whimsical evil-intentioned souls. This distortion caused severe damage to the fundementals of theTorah and Bible. The holy Quran however, has been free of any form of distortion and change until today and still is. According to the promise of Allah (swt) it will remain without the slightest distortion until the Day of Judgment. The above mentioned verse indicated that the Prophet (s) was fearful of distortion and change in the holy Quran similar to the Torah and Bible, and that it may get deviated from its meaning and become the tool in the hands of the evil-intentioned, who might add something they desire to it and remove something

1. *Surah al-Alaq*, Chapter 96, verse 1-19.

from it. To relieve His messenger from this stress and worry, Allah (swt) revealed this verse with the surety that the Quran will not meet the same fate as the Torah and Bible, and the hands of the ill-intentioned will not have the courage to get near it.

The meaning of *Dhikr* (invocation) in the holy Quran

It is neccessary to give some explanations about the meaning of *Dhikr* in the holy Quran. The term *Dhikr* can be seen in numerous verses of the holy Quran:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ﴾

"Indeed, We have sent down the Remnder and indeed, We shall preserve it."[1]

﴿وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالاً نُّوحِيٓ إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ فَسْـَٔلُوٓاْ أَهْلَ ٱلذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلزُّبُرِ ۗ وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ٱلذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾

"We did not send any apostles before you except as men, to whom We revealed(the Dhikr). Ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know, and sent them with manifest proofs and scriptures. We have sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify for the people that which has been sent down to them, so that they may reflect."[2]

The term *Dhikr* means remembrance. There are numerous verses in the Quran in which the term *Dhikr* has been applied to the holy Quran because it is a reminder of Allah (swt). The holy Quran is the Word,of Allah (swt) and a sign from among the countless signs of Allah (swt) and it inevitably reminds man of Allah (swt).

Therefore, the meaning of *Dhikr* in this verse is the holy Quran, and this verse means that He revealed the Quran and He will protect and safe guard it, and the hands of the malevolent and evil-intentioned

1. *Surah al-Hijr* Chapter 15 verse 9.

2. *Surah al-Nahl*, Chapter 16 verse 43-44.

will not be able to add or delete anything, and if distortion finds its way to it, it will no longer be the remembrance (*Dhikr*) of Allah (swt). This is the meaning of protection by Allah (swt). He will protect it from distortion.

Few questions and their answers

First uncertainty and its response

Those who consider distortion in the Quran have mentioned some uncertainties about this verse. The first uncertainty is that the term *Dhikr* in the book of Allah does not always mean the Quran and most often it means the Messenger of Allah (s). To prove and verify their saying they quote a verse from *Surah Talaq* which says:

﴿أَعَدَّ ٱللَّهُ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٗا شَدِيدٗاۖ فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ يَٰٓأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْۚ قَدۡ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيۡكُمۡ ذِكۡرٗا ١٠ رَّسُولٗا يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَٰتٖ لِّيُخۡرِجَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ مِنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِۚ وَمَن يُؤۡمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ وَيَعۡمَلۡ صَٰلِحٗا يُدۡخِلۡهُ جَنَّٰتٖ تَجۡرِي مِن تَحۡتِهَا ٱلۡأَنۡهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدٗاۖ قَدۡ أَحۡسَنَ ٱللَّهُ لَهُۥ رِزۡقًا ١١﴾

"Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment. So be wary of Allah, O you who possess intellect and have faith! Allah has already sent down to you a reminder, an apostle reciting to you the manifest signs of Allah, so that He may bring out those who have faith and do righteous deeds from darkness into light. And whoever has faith in Allah and does righteous deeds, He shall admit him into gardens with streams running in them, to remain in them forever. Allah has certainly granted him an excellent provision."[1]

They say, in the above verse, the term *Rasulan* is either a substitute or an explicative connection for the term *Dhikr* and then say taking this verse into consideration, we can say that wherever *Dhikr* has come,

1. *Surah al-Talaq,* Chapter 65, verse 10-11.

the Messenger of Allah (s) has been the objective. This includes the verse:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ﴾

"Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder and indeed, We will preserve it."[1]

In which Allah (swt) says that is He sent the Prophet (s) and He shall protect him. This uncertainty has several responses:

Firstly, attributing *Dhikr* to the Prophet (s) is not as clear and apparent in the verse they have presented. If the objective of *Dhikr* is the Prophet (s), it would seem more appropriate to use the term "*Irsal*" (sending), and say, for example, *Wa arsala rasulan*. However the term "*Inzal*" does not correspond with sending a messenger. Some commentators say *Rasulan* is the substitute or explicative connexion for the term *Dhikran*. However a group of highly ranked commentators such as the author of *Majma Al Bayan*, and Allamah Tabatabaei, in the valuable *Al Mizan* commentary, believe that *Rasulan* is the object of the omitted verb, as if this verse is as follows: "*and We revealed to you a Dhikr and sent down a messenger...*"

Some consider *Rasulan* as the object of *Dhikran*, since *Dhikran* is an infinitive noun and can have an actor and an object of action. Here, *Rasulan* is the object of action for the infinitive noun *Dhikran*.

Secondly, assuming that the mentioned verse of *Surah Talaq* is correct and complete, one case cannot be applied to the whole Quran and say the Prophet (s) is the objective wherever the term *Dhikr* is used in the Quran. It is very clear and obvious in some verses that the objective of *Dhikran* is the holy Quran. For example:

1. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15 verse 9.

﴿وَقَالُواْ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِى نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ ٱلذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ۝٦ لَّوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّـٰدِقِينَ ۝٧ مَا نُنَزِّلُ ٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةَ إِلَّا بِٱلْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوٓاْ إِذًا مُّنظَرِينَ ۝٨ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَـٰفِظُونَ﴾

"They said," O you, to whom the Reminder has been sent down, you are indeed crazy. (6)Why do you not bring us the angels should you be truthful"(7)We do not send down the angels except with due reason, and then they will not be granted any respite.(8)Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will preserve it(9)."[1]

It is obvious that objective of *Dhikr* in the first verse is the Prophet (s), and in the final verse it says:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَـٰفِظُونَ﴾

"Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will preserve it."[2]

Most definitely, the object of the second *Dhikr* is the same as the first, and undoubtedly, the meaning of the first *Dhikr* is the holy Quran. Also this is what is said in another verse:

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِٱلذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ لَكِتَـٰبٌ عَزِيزٌ﴾

"Indeed those who defy the Reminder when it comes to them.... Indeed it is an unassailable Book."[3]

As you can see, in this noble verse the term *Dhikr* has clearly been described as the beloved book (Quran) and does not mean the Prophet (s), so the apparent meaning of the term Dhikr is the Quran revealed to the Prophet (s).

The second uncertainty and its response

1. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15, verse 6-9.
2. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15, verse 9.
3. *Surah Ha-Mim*, Chapter 41, verse 41.

The other uncertainty which is weaker than the first is verse 6 in *Surah Hijr*:

﴿وَقَالُواْ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِى نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ ٱلذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ﴾

"They said," O you, to whom the Reminder has been sent down, you are indeed crazy."[1]

The pronoun *Lahu* refers to the Prophet (s) and not to *Dhikr*.

The third uncertainty and its response

They say the word *Hafezoon* (the protectors) means *Alemoon* (the most aware) and nothing else. If they say *Hafezoon* means those who memorise, and memorization is a kind of knowledge so it is possible to say *Hafezoon* can mean *Alemoon*. We shall say *Hafezoon* does not mean those who memorize, and ascribing the meaning *Hefz* to Allah (swt) is incorrect because it requires Him to memorize it and this meaning is totally wrong. What the words of Allah (swt) mean is that we will protect it from the raid of foreigners and infidels. *Hefz* (protection) cannot mean *Ilm* (knowledge) or *Ilm* mean *Hefz*.

The fourth uncertainty and its response

They say that Allah's saying "*and We shall protect the Quran*" means that He will not let anyone criticise, doubt or disparage the Quran as He will dissuade the hearts of such people from reaching their objectives.

We shall say in response that throughout history, much critiscism, disparagement and delusive doubt has been directed toward the Quran by wise enemies and ignorant friends, and many books have been written on the uncertainties and responses to them. Therefore, this verse cannot mean He will protect it from criticism.

But if this means the criticism will not cause any damage or harm to it, we must say, the content and teachings of the Quran are so solid, firm and stable that no one has the power to confront them, nor will the greatness and magnanimity of the Quran ever reduce. Throughout

1. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15, verse 6.

history, whoever tried to confront it, has ended in disgrace and ignominy.

﴿ذَٰلِكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيۡبَۛ فِيهِۛ هُدٗى لِّلۡمُتَّقِينَ﴾

"*This is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God wary.*"[1]

The verse *Ina lau Lahafezoon* means that after the revelation of the Quran, Allah is its protector and keeper.

The content of this verse is that "*We revealed the Quran and will be its protector*" from the deceit of enemies and the plots of the malicious; and not let the hands of traitors and the ill-intentioned to damage or harm it, change or transform, add or omit.

The fifth uncertainty and the response to it

They say that if the source of pronoun in the "*Lahu lahafezoon*" is *any Quran* that has been written or printed on paper or sheep's skin or wood etc.,will be protected, this would inevitably be rejected. The intended meaning is that it is protected from change and transformation and will not suffer the same fate as the Torah and Bible.

In the holy Quran Allah (swt)'s attributes are mentioned following a verse conforming with the content of the previous verses and it is possible to say that they are a form of "*Talil*" (determine the cause of command logically and linguistically. For example, when it talks about mercy and forgiveness, it says *Innallah Ghaforun Rahim* at the end of the verses, and when it talks about science and knowledge, it says *Innallah Alimun Khabir*. This conformity is also present in other verses as well.

This conformity is also present in *Tanzilun Min Hakimin Hamid*. This means this book was revealed from a wise source and its wisdom requires *La Tatihil Batilun min Bayna Yadayh*.

Since the Prophet (s) is the last Messenger of Allah (s) and His book is the last book for people's guidance, thus it has to remain forever as

1. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 2.

the guiding light for people. Any distortion will converse Allah's (swt) wisdom, Thus the Quran must be protected at all costs. Everything that makes man come near or distances him from Allah (swt) have been mentioned in the Quran as uttered by the holy Prophet (s), in the *Hajatul wida* sermon:

"I ordered you to what nears you to paradise and prohibited you from what nears you to hell-fire."

An undeserved justification

Those who support distortion in Quran say this verse means there are no contradictions and controversies in the Quran, and whatever it reports from the past and the future are all correct, and falsehood is not present in it. But the verse does not include non-distortion in the Quran. The evidence given, are two traditions:

1– Imam Baqir (a) in the commentary of Ali Ibrahim Qummi is quoted as saying regarding this verse:

"From the Torah, Bible and Psalms, distortionists have not found their way into the Quran, and what I mean by *Walman Khalf* is that after this, no book that nullifies the Quran will come. Thus whatever has come in the Quran will not be nullified by the Torah, the Bible or the Psalms nor any other book that comes after it."

This means that the past traditions and the stories of the Prophets in the previous books are not disavowed and do not contradict nor controvene them, and in the future, no book will come that will contradict the Quran.

2– Imam Sadiq (a) and Imam Baqir (a) said on the commentary of the mentioned verse in *Majma Al Bayan*:

"There is no falsehood in the reports given by the Quran about the past or future."

Answer:

La Ta'atihil Batilun means no falsehood, including distortion, contradiction and incongruity, etc.,and does not need further explanation since distortion, incongruity, etc., are all types of false nonsense which the noble verse of the Quran considers distant from it.

Another response:

La ta'atihil batilun is followed by *la min khalfihi* which says no nonsense found its way into the Quran in the past and none will in the future. *La yatihi* means from outside. The verse "*La yatihi batilun*" means no falsehood can approach it, no change or transformation can occur in it. Any form of distortion, addition or omission, change or transformation is a kind of falsehood. Briefly, contradiction and incongruity in the rulings or reports of the Quran are falsehoods that the Quran has denied in the verse:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا۟ فِيهِ ٱخْتِلَٰفًا كَثِيرًا﴾

"*Do they not contemplate the Qur'an? Had it been from [someone]other than Allah, they would have surely found much discrepancy in it..*"[1]

This book has been revealed by Allah (swt), therefore, you cannot find any discrepency in it.

Also, the negation of the reports, in the previous divine books, by the Quran and the contradiction of the Quran with divine books of the past, or the negation of the Quran by any new divine book after the Quran, are all falsehoods that are rejected by this verse and the two traditions that were mentioned following this verse.

3– The law of grace

The scholars of the science of theology say about the law of grace. The wisest Lord sends messengers and reveals books because of His grace. Allah decided to make man prosperous in this world and the next, but man cannot reach prosperity unless the ways leading to prosperity and adversity are shown to him by prophets and books. This was Allah's Grace (swt), so no one can now argue that there were no prophets or books or successors of the Prophet (s) to save us from mistakes and sins.

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1. *Surah al-Nisa*, Chapter ٤, verse 82.

Therefore, as a requirement of the law of grace, the book of Allah (swt) which is the last book, must be protected from any kind of change and transformation. This law has also been used in the science of theology as the reason to prove that Imamate is necessary for the immunity of Quran from any distortion.

4– The Thaqalayn tradition

The Thaqalayn tradition has been successively transmitted by Sunni and Shias from the Messenger of Allah (s). The wordings of the tradition in *Sunan Tirmidhi* are as follows:

"Zeid ibn Arqam says: 'The Messenger of Allah (s) said: Truly I am leaving behind two things among you, which, if you adhere to after me, you will never go astray. One of the two is greater than the other. One is the book of Allah (swt) which is a rope decending from sky to the earth, and the other is my Household. These two will never separate until they approach me at the Kowthar pond. Thus, be careful how you act towards these two after me."

It is said in *Alsawaeq Al Muhareqa* that this tradition has been reported by thirty people from the companions of the Prophet (s). The means of transmission for the majority of them are valid.

The late Ayatollah Khoei has used this tradition to prove non-distortion of the Quran. He says: The Thaqalayn tradition clearly states the obligation of adhering to the book (Quran) until the Day of resurrection. Thus distortion is definetly impossible. Also, this narration indicates that the Quran and the Ahlul bayt (a) are united and will remain among the people until the Day of judgment. Inevitably, adherence to these two will protect the nation from corruption.

And evidently, adhering to the Itrah (close family) of the Prophet (s) is by following their orders and prohibitions.

In conclusion, the authority of the Quran present today is restricted to the approval of the pure Imams (a) and has no authority without it, and it is not possible to adhere and refer to it, whereas, the appearance of this tradition (Thaqalayen tradition) shows that the Quran and the close family (Itra) of the Prophet (s) are separate authorities as well as

references for the nations and the Quran is the major authority and the authority of none of them is restricted, or depends on the other.

This is not in contradiction with receiving explanations and interpretations of the Quran from the *Itra* and regarding them as illustrators of the Quran. Is it possible to rely on the Quran where there is no need to explain it, or, is it not possible to rely on the Quran without the approval of the *Itrah*?

This *Mutawatir* (successive) tradition shows that this Quran is reliable and possible to adhere to, and the nation must adhere to it until the Day of judgment, and one of the two sources that the Prophet (s) has left behind for the nation which is more desirable and bigger than the other. To explain this reasoning one can say that according to the exact text in the Quran, the Quran is the book of guidance for men and is the guide, leader, light and illuminatior for man in darkness and ignorance and by following and submitting to it man will reach prosperity and perfection. Now if any addition or omission occurs in the book of guidance and the prescription of prosperity and if something is added or removed from it, is it possible to reach its objectives by referring and adhering to it? For example let us assume one of the important social and political issues that plays an effective and influential role in society has been deleted from the Quran, or the verse and evidence that teach us the correct way of dealing with that issue has been deleted, how can men possibly pave the correct way for this issue and reach the desired perfection by referring to the Quran?

Thus, adherence and reference to the Quran and its correct usage strictly requires no occurance of any change or transformation, whether addition or omission, to have taken place in the Quran, otherwise it will not be possible to adhere and rely on it. If it is not possible to adhere to the Quran, then it would have no obligation upon us as well, since obligation in any matter is on the assumption that the *Mukallaf* has the ability to perform that certain act. In this tradition, the Prophet (s) has obliged the whole nation to adhere to the Quran until the Day of resurrection, it necessitates the survival and endurance of Quran until the Day of resurrection, and similarly, the survival of the *Itrah* and their commands and orders until the Day of

judgment. These two magnanimous things will remain among us until that day and will never separate.

The fact that the pure Imams (a) have obliged us to refer and adhere to the Quran and grab hold of its rope of guidance is clear proof from them. The present Quran is the same one that was revealed to the Prophet (s) and no addition or omission has occurred in it.

5– Recitation of a full Surah in Salah (prayer) and non- distortion of Quran

According to the narrations and traditions transmitted from the pure and infallible Imams (a), it is obligatory to read a full *Surah* after surah *Hamd* in the first and second *Rakah*. This is the perspective of the followers of the Ahlul bayt (a), not the Sunnis.

The fact that the pure Imams (a) have ordered their followers to read a full *Surah* in prayer is a solid reason for non-distortion in the Quran because it would not have been possible to specify to read a full *Surah* if it was possible that all the *Surahs* of the Quran had somehow been distorted. Without being certain of the completeness of a *Surah*, obligating Muslims to read a full *Surah*, the original acquisition of which is not possible, would be an overburdened duty (*mala yataq*). Thus, this order and leaving the choice of the *Surah* to us, is a firm proof of non- distortion in the Quran, which is the same Quran that was gathered and compiled during the time of the Messenger of Allah (s).

However, we may see the possibility of the likelihood that the ruling on reading a full *Surah* after Hamd in prayer continued in the time of the Prophet (s) but after him, because of the distortion, the ruling of reading a full *Surah* was removed. This means reading a full *Surah* in prayer was abrogated after the Prophet (s). This abrogation couldn't have taken place after the Prophet(s) because the revelations stopped after the demise of the Prophet (s), and this is what all Muslims believe.

Thus, this ruling of reading a full *Surah* in prayer existed from the time of the Prophet (s) and will remain until the Day of resurrection because it was not abrogated. This necessitates the present Quran to be free of any faults and distortion. Otherwise, it confirms the

uselessness of the orders of pure Imams (a) (God forbid), by saying it is not possible to obey them because a complete *Surah* does not exist.

Answer to an important question

Another issue raised is that because we are certain that no distortion has taken place in some of the small *Surahs*; for example, *Surah Ikhlas, Qadr, Nasr,* etc., we can say that when the pure Imams advised us to read a full *Surah* in the first and second *rakah*, they meant these small *Surahs*.

If this is correct the pure Imams (a) could have made the *Surahs* that had not been distorted an exception. The absence of any restriction is a full proof of the fact that the Quran in the time of the Pure Imams (a) was the same as the Quran in time of the Prophet (s) and no change or transformation occurred in it. The other similar reason is the division of a full *Surah* into five parts in the *Ayat* prayer. How is it possible to divide one of the present *Surahs* into five parts and be certain of the recitation of a full *Surah* in the *Ayat* prayer?

The other reason is the narrations that have been transmitted from the Pure Imams (a) on the rewards for reciting *Surahs* or Quranic verses, which if distorted, there would not be any chance of receiving the rewards.

6– Another proof of non-distortion in the Quran

Some claim that distortion must have either occurred in the time of the three Caliphs, Abu Bakar, Omar and Uthman, or in the time of Bani Umayyah.

It was either unintentional or intentional.

If intentional; the reasons were either political or apolitical.

Now we shall analyse these three probabilities:

Distortion of the Quran was unintentional and elimination of some verses was because of their inaccessibility. The assumption is that the verses and the *Surahs* of the holy Quran were available to people in a scattered form and the possibility exists that they did not find access to some of the verses and *Surahs* during compilation.

The second probability is that the distortion and elimination of some Quranic verses and *Surahs* were intentional, but not related to political issues like Imamate and leadership.

The third probability is that deletion and distortion of some Quranic verses were meant to achieve political and materialistic objectives and intentions. They are all invalid and rejected for the following reasons:

The response to the first probability is that the Quran was gathered and compiled during the time of the Prophet(s) and the special personal attention of the Prophet (s) because he was fully aware of the fate of theTorah and Bible and knew that these two books were severely distorted and their validity, completely eliminated. For this reason, he tried very hard to protect, teach and compile the Quran so that it would remain immune from any distortion. Also, the Quran defines it self as the book, and says:

﴿ذَٰلِكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيۡبَۛ فِيهِۛ هُدٗى لِّلۡمُتَّقِينَ﴾

"This is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God wary."[1]

This indicates that the Quran was compiled and written down at the time of the Prophet (s) and was in the form of a specific and famous book otherwise what would *the book* or *The book of Allah,* the *Surah* mean. The Quran says:

﴿وَإِن كُنتُمۡ فِي رَيۡبٖ مِّمَّا نَزَّلۡنَا عَلَىٰ عَبۡدِنَا فَأۡتُواْ بِسُورَةٖ مِّن مِّثۡلِهِۦ وَٱدۡعُواْ شُهَدَآءَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾

"And if you are in doubt concerning what We have sent down to Our servant, then bring a surah like it, and invoke your helpers besides Allah, should you be truthful."[2]

1. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2 verse 2.
2. *Surah al-Baqarah,* Chapter 2, verse 23.

﴿أَمۡ يَقُولُونَ ٱفۡتَرَىٰهُۖ قُلۡ فَأۡتُواْ بِسُورَةٖ مِّثۡلِهِۦ وَٱدۡعُواْ مَنِ ٱسۡتَطَعۡتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾

"Do they say," He has fabricated it?" Say," Then bring a surah like it, and invoke whomever you can, besides Allah, should you be truthful."[1]

﴿أَمۡ يَقُولُونَ ٱفۡتَرَىٰهُۖ قُلۡ فَأۡتُواْ بِعَشۡرِ سُوَرٖ مِّثۡلِهِۦ مُفۡتَرَيَٰتٖ وَٱدۡعُواْ مَنِ ٱسۡتَطَعۡتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾

"Do they say," He has fabricated it?" Say," Then bring ten surahs like it, fabricated, and invoke whomever you can, besides Allah, should you be truthful."."[2]

﴿تَنزِيلُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَا رَيۡبَ فِيهِ مِن رَّبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"The (gradual) sending down of the Book, there is no doubt in it, is from the Lord of all the worlds."[3]

﴿ٱلنَّبِيُّ أَوۡلَىٰ بِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ مِنۡ أَنفُسِهِمۡۖ وَأَزۡوَٰجُهُۥٓ أُمَّهَٰتُهُمۡۗ وَأُوْلُواْ ٱلۡأَرۡحَامِ بَعۡضُهُمۡ أَوۡلَىٰ بِبَعۡضٖ فِي كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ مِنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ وَٱلۡمُهَٰجِرِينَ إِلَّآ أَن تَفۡعَلُوٓاْ إِلَىٰٓ أَوۡلِيَآئِكُم مَّعۡرُوفٗاۚ كَانَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ مَسۡطُورٗا﴾

"The Prophet is closer to the faithful than their own souls, and his wives are their mothers. The blood relatives are more entitled to inherit from one another in the Book of Allah than the[other] faithful

1. *Surah Yonus*, Chapter 10, verse 38.
2. *Surah Hud*, Chapter 11, verse 13.
3. *Surah al-Sajdah*, Chapter 32, verse 2.

and Emigrants, barring any favour you may do your comrades. This has been written in the Book."[1]

﴿كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلۡنَٰهُ إِلَيۡكَ مُبَٰرَكٞ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ﴾

"(It is) a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may contemplate its signs, and that those who possess intellect may take admonition."[2]

All these verses confirm the fact that the Quran was in the form of an independent book with specified verses and *Surahs* that had special names, in the time of the Prophet (s); for example, *Surah Towhid, Baqarah, Al Imran*, etc. If it was scattered or kept in the memory of people, the term *book* would not be assigned to it.

If the Quran had not been compiled during the time of the Prophet (s) his saying, "I leave among you two weighty things, the book of Allah (swt) and my Itrah," would not have been correct.

The second probability becomes invalid because the political objectives and social status of time was not such that would force them to distort the Quran to achieve their objectives. Secondly, in spite of all those recitors and memorizors of the Quran and the erudite among the companions, how was it possible for anyone to change and distort the Quran? And fundamentally was it possible for any distortion to occur in the Quran at the time of the first two caliphs when their caliphate was putting in hard work and effort for religion and to defend Islam? If such an event had taken place in their time by them or their agents, those who refused to follow Abu bakar and had objections towards him, such as, Sad ibn Ibadah and his companions, would have used this important matter as a weapon against him. Thus the probability of intentional distortion of verses, other than those related to leadership and Imamate, is completely baseless.

The third probability is also baseless because Fatemah's going (s) to the mosque of the Prophet (s) after his demise and justifiying the leadership of Ali (a) is a definite one.

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1. *Surah al-Ahzab*, Chapter 33, verse 6.

2. *Surah al-A'la*, Chapter 38, verse 29.

According to the reports of the late Allamah Tabarsi in the book *Al-Ihtijaj*, twelve people, including Abu Dharr, Miqdad and Salman Farsi justified and bore witness that caliphacy was the right of Ali ibn Abi Talib (a).

In their justifications, they used the Ghadeer Khum incident and the virtues and good deeds of Ali (a) as their arguments. They never said that there were verses in the Quran about his leadership and the pure Imams (a) which had been deleted because of their whimsical souls and political objectives.

Imam Ali (a) himself never used this justification and the late Allamah Majlesi has concluded a certain chapter in *Bihar* specific to the justifications of Ali (a). If such explicit verses on the issue of caliphacy were expected to exist in the Quran, using these verses as arguments would have had priority over using the verses: *Inama Waliukumullah...* and other similar ones. Also, after Ali (a) and Fatimah (s) none of the pure Imams (a) have any sayings about the verses that were on leadership in the Quran and were deleted. None of the narrations on the issue of leadership and Imamate and the justifications of the pure Imams (a) and their companions that have been transmitted to us point to this.

Ali's (a) silence a proof of non-distortion in the Quran

The best proof on non-distortion inthe Quran is the silence of Ali (a), the Master of the pious ones. If the holy Quran had been distorted and the leadership verses and its likes had ben deleted, Ali (a) would definitely not have remained silent, or at least, once he had become caliph and the people paid allegiance to him, his first act would have been to correct the Quran. However, we see that he did not do so.

In fact, this is the speech he delivered about the acts of Omar and Abu Bakr:

"The caliphs before me did acts in which they knowingly disagreed with the Messenger of Allah (s). They broke their vow of allegiance and changed his customs. And now, in case I force people to abandon them and restore the acts as they were at the time of the Prophet (s), my army scatters and leaves me abandoned and alone, or to say the most, I will remain with a small number of my followers who are

familiar with me and my Imamate based on the book of Allah (swt) and the customs of the Prophet (s)... I swear to Allah (swt), when I ordered Muslims not to perform any prayer other than the obligatory ones in congregations, and said performing recommended prayers in congragations is an innovation in religion, a group of my army-who fought on my side- shouted: "Oh, the customs of Omar! Oh, Muslims! Ali wants to change the customs of Omar and the official Islam and stop us from remmended prayers in Ramadhan," so much so that I became fearful of their rebellion.

Oh! Oh! What I suffered tolerating the ugly manners of this nation! Among their disagreement with me is their obedience to those deviated leaders, as well as following a leader who is leading the society towards hellfire."

As you can see, the Imam (a) deeply protests against the situation and events that took place before him and complains severely about what Abu Bakr and Omar caused to religion and informs people of the truth. However, he makes no reference to distortion in the Quran and the deletion of any verses even though, in case of such events, the priority would have been first to state the doubt and distortion that might have occurred in the Quran.

The story of the compilation of the Quran during the time of Uthman was that many recitation differences came into existence and as a result some tensions were created among Muslims in some regions. To remove these tensions, Uthman ordered all the Qurans to be collected, and announced one recitation as officially correct and stopped all the other recitations. Unity-in-recitation indicated no distortion.

7– The conformity of narrations and traditions with the holy Quran

Another reason mentioned in the numerous narrations that have been transmitted from the pure and infallible Ahlul Bayt (a) is that each tradition and narration must be submitted to the Quran, and if it is in conformity with the book of Allah, it can be acted upon, otherwise it is useless.

We also have narrations on contradictory traditions that consider taking the tradition that agrees with the Quran and act upon it and

reject the tradition that does not agree with the Quran. The later author of *Wasael* has collected these traditions in chapter nine of *Kitab Al Qadha* of *Wasael.*Thus, the criterion and standard for validity and non validity of narrations and traditions is their agreement and total non-defiance of the holy Quran. Here, it is possible to put two queries forward that must be replied to:

The first query: The claimants of distortion may say that the narrations are exclusive to the traditions related to religious rulings and surely no distortion has occurred to the traditions on religious rulings. These traditions do not prove non-distortion in the Quran.

The response is that the mentioned traditions are not restricted to religious rulings and these narrations are all inclusive, and, therefore, all beliefs, historical and moral issues, must be compared and checked for conformity with the Quran.

Forged traditions and narrations

The history of tradition and narration proves that a series of Israelite narrations, in accordance with the Torah and Bible, has been added to our narrations by a group of unsavoury characters. A majority of these traditions are related to the stories of the Prophets (a) in order to ascribe those slanders to Islam and our Prophet (s) and corrupt and destroy people's beliefs. For example they have quoted certain traditions and narrations about Prophet Yusuf (a) that are completely inconsistent with what the Quran has said about him.

In the holy Quran, Allah (swt) says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِۦ ۖ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَآ أَن رَّءَا بُرْهَٰنَ رَبِّهِۦ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ ٱلسُّوٓءَ وَٱلْفَحْشَآءَ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ﴾

"She certainly made for him; and he would have made for her [too]had he not beheld the proof of his Lord. So it was, that We might turn away from him all evil and indecency. He was indeed one of Our dedicated servants."[1]

1. *Surah Yosuf,* Chapter 12, verse 24.

However, we find certain narrations about Prophet Yusuf (a) that are definitely not by the infallible Ahlul Bayt (a) but forged by the malevolent Israeilites. This is why there is the repetition of "compare the tradition or narration with the Quran; if it agrees, accept it, otherwise smash it on the wall," by the infallible Ahlul Bayt (a). They are the true interpreters and scholars of the Quran thus, the checking of conformity of narrations is general and not exclusive to the narrations on rulings.

Also there are narrations on the principles of belief that are not in agreement with the Quran; for example, those that mention seeing Allah or His objectivity, or narrations that question the infallibility of the Prophets (a), or demand the sayings on *Jabr* (predetermination of mans actions by Allah (swt)) or *Tafwidh* (handing over management of ones affairs to Allah (swt)). If all of these are not justifiable or possible to interpret, the contents of these narrations will not be acceptable as they are not in agreement with the Quran. In brief, the majority of disagreements and contradictions are mostly in such issues and less in issues that are related to Islamic rulings.

The second query: It is impossible to claim that such narrations were issued by the Prophet (s) before the Quran was distorted, because distortion occurred after the Prophet (s).

The response is that most of these narrations have been issued by the pure Ahlulbayt (a) which order us to compare their sayings with the Quran which clearly indicates that no fault has occurred in this Quran which is the very Quran revealed to the heart of the Prophet (s). Here we shall refer to some of these as examples:

It is said that Imam Baqir (a) quotes his father and fore fathers as saying: The Messenger of Allah (s) said:

"In any right there is a truth and in any reality there is a light. So take whatever is in agreement with the Word of Allah (swt) and leave whatever disagrees with the Book of Allah (swt)."

Imam Sadiq (a) is quoted as saying:

"Whenever you came across two narrations that are in contradiction with one another, compare them with the Book of Allah (swt) and take the one in accordance with it and reject the one opposing it."

Imam Ali ibn Musa (a) is quoted as saying:

"If you come across two different traditions, compare them to the book of Allah (swt) and follow whatever it says, including the lawful and the unlawful, and if it is not present in the book of Allah (swt), compare it with the customs of the Prophet(s)."

8– Traditions on rejecting distortion

A) The late Kolaini quotes a tradition in a letter by Imam Baqir (a) to Sad Al Kheir, a part of which is as follows:

The Imam (a) has described a group of Muslims who abandoned the Quran; saved its letters and words, but changed the restrictions (Hudood) in it; that is to say, they protected the Quranic letters and changed the rulings. The term *Hudood* means restrictions. In this tradition he is describing a man who is protecting the Quarnic letter but destroying its limits.

B) It is said in the book Imam Raza (a) wrote on the rulings of religion for Mamun:

The intention of quoting this verse is to describe the Quran as follows:

﴿لَّا يَأۡتِيهِ ٱلۡبَٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيۡنِ يَدَيۡهِ وَلَا مِنۡ خَلۡفِهِۦۖ تَنزِيلٞ مِّنۡ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ﴾

"Falsehood cannot approach it, from before it nor from behind it, a gradual revelation from One, the All-wise, All-laudable."[1]

He then said:

'The Book of Allah is the truth from *Surah Fatiha* to the end.' This clarifies the fact that the present Quran is the book of Allah and everything inside it is true.

C) Ali ibn Salim quotes his father saying: I asked Imam Sadiq (a):

"What is your saying about the Quran? He replied: The Quran is the Word of Allah (swt), the Book of Allah (swt), and has been revealed and sent down by Him, and nullity cannot find its way into it from any direction."

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1. *Surah al-Fosselat*, Chapter 41, verse 42.

The Imam's (a) reply fully rejects any form of change or distortion in the words of Allah (swt).

D) Nahjul Balagha quotes Imam Ali (a) saying:

"The Book of Allah is among you while it speaks of the lawful and the unlawful and the good deeds and virtues."

What is meant by *Kitabu Rabukum* is the Quran in the hands of Muslims today.

E) Nahjul Balagha quotes Imam Ali (a) saying:

"This Quran is a writing composed between two covers (that has enclosed Quran from both sides)."

F) It is also said:

"And the Book of Allah (swt) is in front of you; it is a speaker whose tongue never tires."

G) "Beware! The Quran is an advisor that will not deceive man. It is a guide that will not lead astray, and a speaker that never lies. Whoever attends its company will leave with something extra (gained) or something less (loss of sins); extra guidance and less blind-heartedness and ignorance."

H) "This is the Book of Allah (swt) by which you can see the truth, and speak and hear with; some of it speaks and is the witness of some others."

I) "And it is upon you to adhere to the Book of Allah since it is the strong rope, the everlasting light, the most effectual core, and the most satisfying, when thirsty."

9– Consecutivity of Quranic verses

The Shia belief regarding the Quran is that all the verses, words, and even the letters, must be from the Messenger of Allah (s) in such a way that certainty about the esoteric meaning of the Quran for those words and letters and sentences can be achieved. Thus there is never a chance of distortion, addition or omission in Quranic verses and letters since any sentence, letter or word from the Quran that is not consecutive, or we are not certain about its Quranic nature, will certainly not be a part of the Quran.

What is in the hands of Muslims today; the verses, chapters, words and letters of the Quran, have all been consecutively quoted from the Messenger of Allah (s).

If an infallible Imam (a) whose saying is infallible, says this (certain) verse is a Quranic verse, the Quranic nature of that certain verse is certainly proven and his saying is as if we are hearing it from the Messenger of Allah (s).

Reasons of Those Considering Presence of Distortion in Quran

Narration of Mushaf Ali

The reasons of those who consider presence of distortion in Quran are the following:

The **first** is the narration that said Amir al Mominin, Ali (a) had a copy of the Quran which included verses that are not in the Quran among people today. It also says that the Imam (a) took it to the government but it did not take it from him. That Quran was left with the pure infallible Imams (a) and is now with Imam Zaman (a).

1– In an argument with a group of companions (Ansar) and immigrants (Muhajerin), Imam Ali (a) said:

"O Talha! Any verse that Allah (swt) has revealed to the Prophet (s) has been dictated by him to me and it is in my own writing and with me. Also the allegorical interpretations of any verse Allah (swt) revealed to his Prophet (s) including all the lawful and unlawful, limits and rulings and anything else the Islamic nation will need until the Day of judgment, have all been dictated by the Prophet (s). Also, rulings on the *Khadsh* indemnity have been mentioned in it."

2– It is said in the argument with the atheists:

"They brought the whole Quran (Ali (a)'s copy, Mushafun Ali), which included all the interpretation, revelations, the clear injunctions (the words or texts conveying a firm and unequivocal meaning) and the equivocal, the abrogating and the abrogated. It did not even fall short of a single letter. But they said: 'We don't need it', and did not accept it.'"

3– Using evidences from Jabir, Abu Ja'far (a) is quoted in the Kafi, saying:

"No one can claim to hold the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the Quran except the saints."

4– Jabir says: I heard Abu Ja'far (a) say:

"Whoever claims to have collected the whole Quran exactly the same way as it was revealed by Allah is a liar. No body compiled and memorised the Quran in the same order it was revealed."

5– Salim ibn Salim is quoted in Kafi to have said:

"A man was reciting the Quran to Abu Abdullah and I was hearing some letters not being recited the same way they usually are by people. Abu Abdullah then said: 'Avoid this recitation and recite the same way people recite until the Qaem (the riser) rises, so that he recites the book the way it must be and make apparent the copy that Ali (a) had written.'"

He also says: "When Ali (a) finished writing that copy, he showed it to the people and said: 'This is the Book of Allah (swt), the way it was revealed to the Prophet (s). Truly I compiled it from two Louhs (pictures).' They said: 'We have the compiled copy of the Quran and do not need this one.' Ali (a) then said: 'I swear to Allah (swt) that after this day you will not see this copy ever. It was my duty to let you know once I have compiled it so that you can read it.'"

The Imamiyah sect believes that only the pure and infallible Imams (a) are aware of all the esoteric meaning of the Quran.

It is possible for many to understand the exoteric Quranic meaning and realise its implication and put it into use. However, the Quran contains certain hidden meanings, the understanding of which is only a special quality of the pure Imams (a), scholars and true interpretors of the Quran. Those who were in close contact with the Prophet (s), truly knew all the hidden and apparent secrets of the Quran.

Responses to Questions on the Narration of Mushaf Ali

The response to the first tradition is that most certainly Ali's (a) copy of Quran is different from the present Quran in the arrangement of chapters and this is what the scholars believe. This means the arrangement of chapters and verses in Ali (a)'s copy of the Quran are in accordance with the revelations, whereas, the arrangement in the present Quran, the *Surahs* are in a different order. Also, there is no doubt that Ali (a)'s copy of the Quran contains interpretations,

commentaries and contexts of revelation of verses and no one rejects this. However, there are no reasons to say there were certain verses in Ali (a)'s copy of Quran which, as a result of distortion, were deleted and are not present in the Quran today. These narrations and others do not imply this. Also, these narrations are not inferring that the Quran in the hands of people today is different in its number of verses to Ali (a)'s copy.

Ibn Sirin is quoted by Suyuti to have said:

"Imam Ali (a) has written the abrogating and the abrogated in his copy (of the Quran). I wrote a hand written appeal to Madina to find this book but I never succeeded."

Ibn Sa'id has narrated from Ibn Sirin:

"Truly Imam Ali (a) compiled this book in the same order as it was revealed. If one gets access to this book, it is filled with knowledge."

And Akrama said:

"If man and Jinn gather together to write a copy similar to Ali (a)'s copy, they will not have the ability to do so."

And Kabi said:

"When the Messenger of Allah (s) passed away, Ali (a) sat at home and compiled the Quran in the same way as it was revealed. If Ali (a)'s copy is found, it truly contains a great deal of knowledge."

These narrations are from the Sunni erudite and have described Ali (a)'s copy of the Quran as having two characteristics. One is containing interpretations and commentaries of the verses and the other is the arrangement of verses in the order they were revealed.

Now, by focusing on the context of the mentioned narrations in Shia books, the explanation becomes clear.

Therefore, none of these narrations suggest that the Quran with the pure Imams (a) contains extra parts of verses or words that the Quran present among Mulims lacks.

The narrations are also those that are in the book of weak traditionists like Salim ibn Salman, Munkhal ibn Jamid Asadi, Amru ibn Abi Al Mugadam and etc.

At the end, I would like to draw your attention to the saying of a number of scholars and traditionists on *Mushafun Ali (a)*.

The late Sheikh Sadooq specifies the Shia belief on the Quran in the hands of people today being the same as the one Allah (swt) revealed to his Prophet (s) and not more than that, and its number of Surahs beng 114, after which he says: "There are some sentences and instructions that were sent down through revelations but are not the Quran and if they were compiled together, they would reach seventy thousand verses. An example is Gabriel saying to the Prophet (s): 'Oh, Mohammad! Tolerate man.'"

He then quotes some sacred traditions from the Prophet (s) which are the Words of Allah (swt) and were revealed to the Prophet (s), but they are not the Quran and have been mentioned separately.

We can quote Sadooq as proof for the case of Ali (a)'s copy of the Quran. That means Ali (a)'s *Mushaf*, in addition to being different in its arrangement of chapters, includes interpretations and commentoraries of the Quran which are all revelations send down by Allah (swt) but not the Quran.

In the beginning of *Al Maqalat*, Sheikh Mufid says:

" A group of Imamiyah sect have said that there is no distortion in the words, verses or chapters of the Quran, but what was present in Ali (a)'s copy of the Quran has been deleted as well as its commentaries. These interpretations and commentaries were among those revealed, even though they were not Quranic sentences and the Words of Allah (swt), which is a miracle as, sometimes the interpretation of the Quran is called the Quran, as Allah (swt) says:

"Do not rush to recite the Quran before the revelation of Allah to you is not finished."

In this verse, the interpretation of the Quran has been called the Quran which the Prophet (s) used to hurry to explain. He then says: 'There is no disagreement among the interpreters on this."

About this, the late Allamah Tabatabaei says:

"The compilation of the Quran by Ali (a) and taking it to people to offer it to them does not suggest any contradiction between what he

had compiled and what they had……. other than the difference in the order of some chapters or verses which did not cause contradiction or change in religious facts; and if the Quran of the Imam (a) was different in religious principles or derivative branches, he would have argued with them and defended it and would not have accepted their turning away from the Quran and saying: 'We do not need it." There is no mention of a verse or chapter in the argument quoted from Imam Ali (a) which infers the issue of leadership or non leadership and accuses them of deleting or distorting a verse or chapter.

The narrations about the esoteric which suggest distortion

The narrations which are used as reasons of distortion in the Quran are of three types which we shall mention in brief:

The first type comprises of general statements which suggest distortion in the Quran and include only twenty cases, some of which we shall point to here:

1– Ali ibn Ibrahim Qummi has quoted Abu Dharr Ghaffari say: when the (following) verse was revealed:

﴿يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ ۚ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكَفَرْتُم بَعْدَ إِيمَـٰنِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ﴾

"On the day when [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black. As for those whose faces turn black [it will be said to them], "Did you disbelieve after having faith? So taste the punishment because of what you used to disbelieve."[1]

The Messenger of Allah (s) said:

"On the Day of judgment, my nation will join with flags." Abu Dharr then said: 'The Prophet will ask the flag nation how they acted towards the Thaqalein. The people with the first flag will say: 'After you, we abandoned and distorted the greater weight.' Then the nation with the second flag will say: 'We distorted and ripped your greater

1. *Surah Al 'Imran,* Chapter 3, verse 106.

weight and disagreed and showed enmity towards your lesser weight and killed them...'"

2– Jabir Jaufi quotes Imam Baqir (a) as saying:

"In Mina, the Messenger of Allah (s) called the people and said: 'I will leave some valuable things as reminders among you; as long as you adhere to them you will never go astray. Two of them are the Book of Allah and my household, and also Ka'bah, the House of Allah (swt).' But they distorted the Book of Allah (swt) and dismantled and destroyed the Ka'bah, and killed the family of the Prophet (s)."

3– Jabir quoted the Prophet (s) as saying:

"On the Day of judgment three things will complain about the people: the Quran, the mosque and the Itra (the household) of the Prophet (s). The Quran will say: 'Oh, Allah! They distorted and ripped me.' The mosque will say: 'Oh, Allah! They loitered and wasted me!' The household of the Prophet (s) will say: 'Oh, Allah! They banished and expelled us from our cities and killed us.'"

Therefore, when a group of Muslims define some verses of the Quran according to their desires and whims and divert them from their real meaning and definition, such narrations consider it as distortion. The evidence for this definition is the narration quoted in Kafi from Imam Baqir (a):

"The abandoning of the book by people is when they establish the words and letters of the Quran, which means they protect and maintain them, but distort its meaning and boundaries."

The second kind of narrations is that which suggests that the name of the pure Imams (a) was present in some of the noble verses and was later deleted and distorted. These types of narrations are numerous and we shall quote only some of them:

1– Abu al Hasan is quoted by Mohammad ibn Feydhal to have said:

"The leadership of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a) is written in all the books sent down by the Prophets (a) and Allah (swt) has not chosen any Prophets (a) that have not accepted the Prophethood of Mohammad (s) and the successorship of Ali (a)."

2– Imam Sadiq (a) is quoted by Ayashi using his own evidences to have said:

"If the Quran was recited the way it was revealed you would have truly found our names written in it."

3– Jabir is quoted in the Kafi to have said:

"Gabriel revealed this verse to the Prophet (s) as follows: 'And if you have doubt and hesitation in what we have revealed about our servant (Ali), then bring a chapter like it."

Response

Firstly, the evidence of the narrators transmitted by Mohammad ibn Fudhayl Azudi are weak:

Secondly, writing about the leadership of Ali (a) in all the books brought by the Prophets (a), including the Quran, does not necessarily require mention of his name. It could mean mentioning the real leadership as similar to the verses on leadership in the Quran which definitely apply to Ali ibn Abi Talib (a). For example:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤۡتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمۡ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down."[1]

The interpreters have said this verse applies to Ali ibn Abi Talib (a).

The other example is the verse:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ بَلِّغۡ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡكَ مِن رَّبِّكَۖ وَإِن لَّمۡ تَفۡعَلۡ فَمَا بَلَّغۡتَ رِسَالَتَهُۥۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعۡصِمُكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهۡدِي ٱلۡقَوۡمَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ﴾

"O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His

1. *Surah al-Ma'edah*, Chapter 5, verse 55.

message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot."[1]

And other examples as this, do not mention his name.

Now, in response to the second narration we shall say:

Firstly, it is weak since it is a Mursalah tradition.

Secondly, what is meant by these narrations is that the sentences revealed as the interpretation of verses are not a part of the Quran but an explanation sent down by Allah (swt). This is because what has been sent down from Allah (swt) is not exclusive to what is in the Quran and it generally includes the Quran, its interpretations, and explanations of the traditions of the Prophets (a). Thus if in this narration it says:

Wa lou qara al qurana kama anzala

It means the Quran must be recited in the same manner it was sent down, meaning, it must be read with its interpretations and commentaries.

Some other narrations say:

"And this is how it was revealed."

This means what was sent down was the interpretation and explanation of the verse, and not a part of the Quran.

From here, the response to the third narration also becomes clear. The meaning of revealing this verse to Mohammad (s) without Gabriel including the word *fi Ala* is an application and definition of *Mina Anzalna* where this commentary was also sent down through Gabriel. There are more than one hundred traditions of this type collected in *Al Kafi* and *Kitab al Hujjah*, the majority being the interpretation and explanation of the application of this verse.

A) About *Tabligh,* the Sunni narrations say:

"O Messenger! Announce what has been sent down from your Lord, truly, Ali is the Master of the faithful and if you do not finish your mission..."

1. *Surah al-Ma'edah*, Chapter 5, verse 67.

The Shia narrations say:

"Announce what has been sent down to you about Ali." It was assumed that the sentence, "Truly, Ali is the master of the faithful," or the parts that were about Ali used to be a part of the verse that had been deleted. Whereas, these words are the explanation and interpretation of "what was revealed to you" and it has been mixed with the verse which has caused this wrong impression.

B) The narration about the verse

﴿إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَذَكَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَٱنتَصَرُواْ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا ظُلِمُواْۗ وَسَيَعۡلَمُ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓاْ أَيَّ مُنقَلَبٖ يَنقَلِبُونَ﴾

"..Except those who have faith, and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah greatly, and aid each other after they have been wronged. And the wrongdoers will soon know to what destination they will return."[1]

Is:

Wa sayalamul Ladhina dhalamoo Ale Mohammade Haqohum

In this narration also, the family of Mohammad (s) is strictly the application of the verse, since they are the perfect example of being oppressed and some of those who have heard these sentences from an Infallible (a), or later seen the narration have assumed that the term *the family of Mohammad* (s) was a part of the verse that was later deleted.

C) Abu Abdillah is quoted by Abu Basir to have said about the verse:

Wa man yute Illah....

"Whoever obeys Allah and his Messenger (in leadership of Ali and the leadership of the Imams after him) has truly:

Fa afooza adhiman Hakadha Nazalta...

1. *Surah al-Sho'ara'*, Chapter 26, verse 227.

This case is also the same as the ones regarding the leadership of Ali (a) and the Imams (a) after him, and it is stating the application of obeying Allah (swt) and His Messenger (s), and it is not a part of the verse. The majority of the narrations that were mentioned following the verse assumed or inferred deletion of a word or sentence from the verse. The narration is only stating the interpretation and application of the verse and such narrations are not exclusive to the issue of leadership and these kinds of narrations are present for other cases. An example is what Imam Hasan (a) has been quoted to have said in *Rowdhah Kafi* about the verse:

﴿أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَعۡلَمُ ٱللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمۡ فَأَعۡرِضۡ عَنۡهُمۡ وَعِظۡهُمۡ وَقُل لَّهُمۡ فِيٓ أَنفُسِهِمۡ قَوۡلَۢا بَلِيغٗا﴾

"They are the ones whom Allah knows as to what is in their hearts. So let them alone, and advise them, and speak to them concerning themselves far-reaching words."[1]

"Fa arez anhum faqad sabaghat alayhem kalimatu ashqae wa sayaq lahum adhabun wa qol lahum fi anfosihim qoalan baligha."

In this tradition, we can see that the sentence

"Faqad sabaghat alayhem kalimatu ashqae wa sayaq lahum adhabun" has been placed in between the sentences

Fa arez anhum and wa qol lahum fi anfosihim qoalan baligha."

The interpretation and explanation of the verse and the revelation has been combined and mixed together.

Regarding the verse:

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِن وَرَآءِ ٱلۡحُجُرَٰتِ أَكۡثَرُهُمۡ لَا يَعۡقِلُونَ﴾

"Indeed those who call you from behind the apartments, most of them do not apply reason."[2]

1. *Surah al-Nisa'*, Chapter 4, verse 63.
2. *Surah al-Hujurat,* Chapter 49, verse 4.

The majority of narrations in the Sunni interpretation books regarding the above say:

"The majority of Bani Tamim tribe do not possess wisdom."

In these narrations also the word "Bani Tamim" states the case and application of the verse. What this means is that those who would call and talk to the Messenger of Allah (s) from behind a wall, were all Bani Tamim. It is possible for some to mistakenly assume that in this verse the word Bani Tamim was deleted for certain intentions and benefits where this word in the narration is definitely stating the application of the verse and it is not a part of the verse.

Fundementally, the Quran does not intend to mention the names of people and only states issues in general. Also the noble verse

﴿وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

"Certainly Allah helped you at Badr, when you were abased [in the enemy's eyes]. So be wary of Allah so that you may give thanks."[1]

In some narrations instead of *Wa antum adhillah* it says *Wa antum zoafa* or *Wa antum qalil*, and as we said none are suggesting distortion and change and each one is the interpretation and explanation of the term *Adhilla*.

The question of Abu Basir from Imam Sadiq (a) which we previously discussed which was whether distortion has occurred in Quran, and if the names of the infallibles pure Imams (a) were in Quran and deleted later intentionally by some people. Now to complete and give further explanation on the previous subjects, we shall quote the question of Abu Basir about the mention of Ali (a)'s name in the Quran from Imam Sadiq (a).

Abu Basir says: "I asked Imam Sadiq (a) about this verse, where Allah said:

Obey Allah and obey the Messenger...

The Imam (a) replied: 'This noble verse was revealed about Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hasan and Husayn (a).'

1. *Surah Al Imran,* Chapter 3, verse 123.

I equired again: 'Why do people say the names of Ali (a) and his household are not mentioned in the book of Allah (swt)?'

The Imam (a) replied: 'Tell people, when prayer was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (s), the number of *Rakahs* whether three or four were not stated until the Prophet (s) interpreted and explained the number of *Rakahs* to people."

When Abu Basir asked the Imam (a) the question, he gave a different response, whereas he could have said: 'Yes, in that certain verse and certain chapter the names of Ali (a) and the Imams (a) were mentioned, but destroyed later by those corrupt people for the sake of political intentions or personal whims.' However the Imam told Abu Basir: 'The Quran puts forward and explains general issues and does not engage in details, just as there is no mention of the number of *Rakahs* in prayer in the Quran but later stated by the Prophet (s). The verse that was about Ali (a) and his children was stated and interpreted and explained by the Prophet (s) to the people.'

Among the valid reasons on the clear non-specificiation of the name of Ali (a) in the Quran is the Ghadir tradition. If the name of that magnanimous one was mentioned in the Quran then there was no need to appoint him on Ghadir day because the Prophet (s) would have used that as his argument and not stated an introduction for appointing him:

Ana owla bikum min anfusekum

Whereas, if there was such specification, Ali (a) and the pure Imams (a) would have used it as an argument and there would not longer have been any need to use the verse:

Innama Waliokum Allah....

Or the announcement verse:

Baligh ma unzila ilayka min rabbik

Or the following verse as reasoning:

Anfosana

The third type suggests distortion has occurred because some of the words in the Quran have been removed and replaced by some other words. Now let's take a look at the narrations of this type:

1– Hozayr is quoted by Ali ibn Ibrahim Qummi using his own evidences to have said that Imam Sadiq (a) said:

Instead of 'those who you have given your blessing to' it was to 'the one you have given your blessing to,' and instead of, 'not those who have been misled,' it was 'other than the misled one.'

According to the scholars and the books of traditions, ascribing this book to Ali ibn Ibrahim Qomi is not very evident and Abu Al Fadhel 'Abbas Alawi, is not well known.

This narration is not suggesting distortion and is only inferring the difference in recitation.

2– Husham ibn Salim is quoted by Ayashi to have said: I asked Imam Sadiq (a) about the noble verse:

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰٓ ءَادَمَ وَنُوحًا وَءَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَءَالَ عِمْرَٰنَ ...﴾

"Indeed Allah chose Adam and Noah, and the progeny of Abraham and the progeny of Imran above all the nations."[1]

He replied: 'This verse was actually the family of Ibrahim and progeny of Mohammad and Ali, but they replaced a name for a name.' This means they changed the family of Mohammad with the family of Imran.

This tradition is commonly known as Morsal and is not trustworthy. For example, in the mentioned tradition Ayashi is quoting from Husham ibn Salim. Most certainly Ayashi cannot quote from Husham without any intermediatories because of the time gap between him and Husham.

3– Moyasar is quoted by Ayashi in his commentary to have said: Imam Baqir (a) said:

"If it was not for the additions and deletions in the book of Allah, our rights would not have remained hidden from the intellectuals, and when the Qaem (the riser) rises and speaks, the Quran will support him."

1. *Surah Al Imran*, Chapter 3, verse 33.

The evidence for this narration is faulty and is not trustworthy as Ayashi has quoted this is his commentary book and as explained above, the evidence is Morsal and cannot be used as a proof.

4– It is quoted in Kafi that Mohammad ibn Solaiman quoted from one of his companions who quoted Imam Kazim (a):

"I said to him, May I be sacrificed for you! We heard some verses of the Quran being recited not the way we used to hear them and we do not see it right to recite them in the same manner we have been taught by you. Have we committed a sin?" The Imam said: 'No, recite it the way you have learnt it. Soon the one who is to teach you will come."

The evidence for this tradition is weak and faulty because Mohammad ibn Solaiman appears in the evidence. Apparently he is called Mohmmad ibn Solaimna Deylami whose trustworthiness has not been confirmed. On the other hand this is a Morsal tradition, meaning it is not clear who Mohammad ibn Solaiman has quoted this from.

5– Abi Abdillah (a) is quoted by Ayashi in his commentary to have said:

"Truly the news from the past, the future and present are present in the Quran and in it were the names of men which have been deleted and one of those names had countless meanings and facades. Only the Ausia know about those meanings and facades."

Since this tradition is Morsal, its evidence is weak and it is one of those traditions which are mentioned in the Ayashi commentary while the evidence has been deleted.

6– Abu Nasr Baznati is quoted in Kadi in Irsal way (i.e. deletion of evidence) to have said:

"Imam Musa ibn Ja'far gave me a copy of the Quran and said: 'Do not look inside it.' I opened it and read the verse:

Lam yakun aladhina Kafaroo

I found the names of seventy men of the Quraysh with the names of their fathers in this book. The Imam (a) then sent someone and ordered me to send the copy back to him."

Even though the content is apparently suggesting the presence of names of a group in the Quran which were later deleted, but it may possibly mean these names were included in the explanation and interpretation of verses sent down through revelations. It does not mean those names were a part of the Quran. The sentence "the past the future and the present are all present in the Quran" does not mean these three cases are explicitly specified in the Quran.

In the book *Wafi*, following this tradition, the late Feydh Kashani (who is one of the great Shia scholars said):

"The purpose may have been to keep the names of those pagans mentioned in the interpretation of this copy as well as the application of "and those who showed polytheism" a secret. These names were sent down through revelation but are not a part of the Quran.

7– Imam Sadiq (a) is quoted in *Thawab Al Aamal* by Sheikh Sadooq to have said:

"Whosoever recites *Surah Al Ahazab* many times will reside in the neighbourhood and next to Mohammad (s) and his family." He then says: "In *Surah Ahzab* there was mention of the bad behaviour of the Qoraysh and non-Qoraysh men and women. O Ibn Sannan! Truly *Surah Ahzab* has disgraced Qorayshi women from among the Arab women. The longer *Surah* was *Surah Baqarah* which they distorted and made incomplete."

Sadooq has quoted this tradition in the book *Thawab Al Amal*, using secondary sources from Ibn Bataeni.

Ibn Bataeni is Ali ibn Hamzah Bataeni about whom Mohammad ibn Masoud quoted from Ali ibn Hasan Fadhal who said: 'Ibn Abi Hamzah Bataeni is a liar and accursed.'

He also said: 'I learnt many traditions from him but I do not see narrating even one tradition from him permissible.'

However, the end part of the tradition which infers the lengthiness of *Surah Ahzab* has also been mentioned in Sunni traditions and is not exclusive to Shia narrations. Nevertheless, from the Shia point of view such narrations are not valid and do not hold a valid position.

8– Abi Abdillah (a) is quoted in *Rijal Kashi* to have said:

"Allah set down the names of seven people in the Quran. They (the Qorayshis) deleted the names of six of them and left the name of Abi Lahab."

There are two unknown people in the evidence of this tradition whose names have not been mentioned in the Rijal (traditionalisits) books and thus not valid. Those two are Abu Ali Khalaf ibn Hamaed and the other is Abi Mohammad Al Hasan ibn Talha.

9– Asbagh ibn Nabafah is quoted in *Gheybat Al Namani* to have said:

"I heard Ali (a) say: 'It seems like I see non-Arab tents in the Kufah mosque teaching the Quran in the same manner as it was sent down.' I said: 'O master of faithful! Is not this Quran the same as it was revealed?' He replied: 'No, the Quraysh deleted their names and the names of their fathers and only left the name of Abu Lahab to irritate the Messenger of Allah (s) as he was his uncle."

There are several faults in this tradition

1– The evidence that includes Abu Solaiman Ahmad ibn Hodha is weak since his trustworthiness has not been approved.The trustworthiness of Ibrahim ibn Ishaq Nahawandi has been weakened. Allamah has said about him:

"I do not trust any of his narrations and he is under question in his religion and school of thought."

2– As we explained when stating the Quran of Ali (a) the names of pagans had descended as a part of the interpretation and application of the verse. What is meant by "they teach Quran the way it was revealed" is that they were teaching the Quran with the interpretation revealed. In response to the narrator when he asks: Is this Quran not the same as revealed, he says: 'This Quran is not the same as what was revealed,' which means the Quran revealed contained interpretations, explanation, description and commentary and the present Quran did not and that the names of the Quraysh pagans and their fathers had been deleted, but it is obvious that anything sent down as the interpretation, commentary and explanation is not the Quran. Thus this narration is the same as the narration on Ali (a)'s Mushaf and does not imply distortion in the present Quran. Of course,

it suggests that this very Quran (Mushafun Ali) contains extra interpretation, commentary and explanation of verses.

3– Fundemantally the methodology of Quran and the Prophet (s) is not naming the hypocrites, but to attract and draw their hearts towards themselves, and therefore, mentioning the names of hypocrites and forcing people to curse them is not in agreement with the general policy of the Prophet (s). Therefore, such a narration is faulty in contents and text.

4– There are some narrations about the Quran that will be taught to people at the time of Imam Mahdi (a) which suggest that this Quran is different in the following ways from the present Quran:

The order of verses and chapters which have been arranged based on the history of revelation.

That Quran contains interpretations, commentories and stating of application which have all been revealed.

According to the traditions about the Quran compiled by Ali (a), this Quran will be taught to people at the time of Imam Zaman (a).

Basically the narrations that are asuumed to suggest distortion in Quran are all faulty and can be criticised in the following ways:

Their evidences are weak and untrustable

The reasons in most of the cases do not testify distortion.

Ignoring the above weaknesses, these narrations are in contradiction with the Quranic verse that rejects any fault or addition in the Quran:

﴿لَّا يَأْتِيهِ ٱلْبَـٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِۦ ۖ تَنزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ﴾

"Falsehood cannot approach it, from before it nor from behind it, a [gradually sent down] revelation from One, All-wise, All-laudable."[1]

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَـٰفِظُونَ﴾

"Indeed We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it."[1]

1. *Surah al-Fosselat*, Chapter 41, verse 42.

We must either justify and explain them or reject them because, based on numerous narrations whose evidence is valid, the narrations contradicting the Quran must be rejected and not used as a criterion for rulings and actions.

1. *Surah al-Hijr*, Chapter 15 verse 9.

PART 3
THE NON-EXISTENCE OF DISTORTION IN THE QUR'AN

– Shias believe in the non existence of distortion in the Qur'an

– The Wahhabis reason for destroying graves

– Examples of Muslims' Dealing with the Graves of Prophets and Saints

– Building mosques over graves

– Praying in holy sanctuaries

Q. What is the view of the Medinite scholars about building over graves and turning them into mosques?

Is it permitted or not?

If not, and has been strongly prohibited, is destroying them and preventing prayer next to graves allowed or not?

Will a building over a land that is Waqf (endowment) be usurping it, if the building is preventing the use of the land over which it is built?

Will it be oppression towards the needy and prevent them from getting what they deserve?

Is removing such a building an obligation?

The scholars from Madina answered the question, even though some believe this answer was prepared by the Wahhabis. Below is the content of the answer:

A. "Based on the consensus among scholars, building over graves is prohibited, since the traditions on this issue are valid, and a majority of scholars have issued the verdict on the obligation of destroying buildings over graves."

They use the tradition from Ali (a) in which he told Abi Al Hajaj:

"Shall I not appoint you to do what the Prophet (s) ordered and chose me for? That job was not to leave any statues (or idols) standing but to destroy them all, and not leave any tall standing graves but to flatten and equalise them with the ground."

This reply continues. However what we are discussing at the moment is the Wahhabis use of this reply in Ramadhan 1344 A.H as the license for destroying graves and the buildings over them. They started destroying the sanctuaries, tombs and shrines of the pure Imams (a) and other graves in Baqi' in Madina from the eighth of Shawwal that very year. The graves of the daughters and wives of the Prophet (s), the grave of the mother of Ali (a), the mother of Abul Fadhl (a) and other Islamic erudite, buried in Baqi' were all destroyed by the Wahhabis.

Based on the ruling of Ibn Qayem and this very reply, the shrine of the Messenger of Allah (s) should have been destroyed, since there is no mention of any exception in the context of the above. They might

have said: “All graves must be destroyed except for the grave of the Messenger of Allah (s).” However, as they were terrified of the reaction of Muslims all over the world, they did not commit such an act, but destroyed the rest of the graves and the buildings over them.

It is quoted that when the Wahhabis commited such tragedies and the news spread in the Islamic world, ceremonies similar to the mourning in Muharram and Ashura were held in all the Shia residing countries; the gatherings and groups mourned, cried and wept. The Howzah lectures were cancelled and telegrams were sent, but to no avail, and this catastrophe and tragedy continues as a painful wound on the body of the history of Islam.

The history of tragedies caused by Wahhabis is a topic that must be discussed separately, and Islamic awareness and sensitivity requires a careful analysis and investigation of this political event which was supported from the beginning by the enemis of Islam and the colonizers. However, at present, we must discuss this issue using their reasons and investigate the validity level of such sayings so that the weakness of such reasons becomes obvious.

The Wahhabis reason for destroying graves

The first proof: the false claim of consensus in destroying graves:

Is there a consensus on destroying graves?

This claim either means the jurists and scholars reached such a consensus, or the practical way of Muslims proved buildings over graves as unlawful. No matter which consensus, they are both faulty.

However, a group of Sunni scholars disagree with this, so it is not possible to claim consensus on the unlawfulness.

The book *Al Fiqh Ala Al Madhahib Al Arba* has collected the jurisprudence issues that are agreed and disagreed upon among the fours schools of thought (Shaffites, Malikites, Hanafites, Hanbalites) accepted and used by all Sunni scholars. This is what it says about building over graves:

"It is *undesirable* to build a room, dome, school, mosque or a wall that surrounds a grave, over it."

As you can see there is *no* word on *unlawfulness* and *only undesirability* of buildings over graves has been mentioned.

In the commentary on *Sahih Muslim* by Nawawi, following the Abi Al Hajaj tradition, the commentator says:

"It is *undesirable* for someone to build a building over a grave in his property and it is *unlawful* if it is in a *Waqf* (endowment) graveyard, and Shafe'i and his companions have specified this issue."

Clearly the unlawfulness pointed to here is not related to construction over graves but building over graves by occupying *Waqf* land, and thus the unlawfulness is accidental and there is no disagreement on this issue. In any case, if building over gravcs is essentially unlawful, it will also be unlawful on a *waqf* land and no one can construct a building over a grave even in his own property.

A large number of *scholars* of the *four schools of thought,* in fact, the majority, have *given the verdict on undesirability* and *not unlawfulness.* Therefore such a consensus does not exist among the scholars. However, if what the Wahhabis mean by their consensus is not building over graves as the practical way of Muslims, it must be said:

The *Muslim way of life* until the time of the Abd Al Wahhab and the Wahhabi movement in which they destroyed graves and attacked and robbed and killed people in Hijaz, Najd and Iraq and other Islamic lands, *was opposed* to this.

Both Sunnis and Shias used to make tombs, shrines, or to say the least, a shade over the graves of the Prophets (a), Saints and scholars. Even before Islam, there were shades and buildings over the graves of Prophets (a) and the pious people.

The grave of Prophets Ibrahim, Ya'qub, Yosuf (a) in *Bayt al Maqdis*, and the grave of Prophets *Houd, Saleh, Yonus and Dhil Kifl* (a) in Iraq, and the grave of Eve in Jeddah, all had buildings over them. This was the same after Islam. The grave of Abu Hanifah in Baghadad still has a tomb and a shrine. There is also a building over the grave of Malik in Baqi'. In Egypt, the grave of Shafe'i has a tomb and shrine. The *Ras al Husayn* place and the grave of Zainab (a) in Egypt (according to some sayings) have a tomb and shrine. Even though there are very few Shias in Egypt, a large group of Sunnis go to visit these auspicious tombs. Also, the grave of Zainab (a) in Syria is enormous and magnificent.

The graves of our pure Imams (a) in Baqi' also used to have a sanctuary and a shrine. The grave of Ibn 'Abbas and the ancestors of the Prophet (a), Abd al Mutalib, Abu Talib and Khadija in the Abu Talib grave yard in Mecca also had buildings. One of the companions of the Prophet (s) who is buried in Turkey also has a tomb and a shrine. In general the graves were respected in Egypt, Arabia, Iraq, Turkey and Iran and all the Islamic lands, and had shades, or, tombs and shrines built over them.

Therefore, the Muslim practical way of life did not consider building over graves unlawful nor did they destroy them; they paid respect to the graves of the Prophets (a) and the pure Imams (a) and even

marked them and made buildings over them. The Prophet (s) used to go to the graves of his parents, Abdullah and Amina, and cry, which shows that those graves were most obviously marked. The graves and buildings that surrounded them were still there after the demise of the Prophet (s) and the Muslims did not destroy them.

Now, our question to the Wahhabis is:

If you consider building over graves and respecting them as polytheism how do you justify the fact that the Muslim scholars disregarded this issue for nearly one thousand and three hundred years?

Why did all Muslims observe silence towards such an ugly and intolerable evil act? If an evil deed (Munkar) is not very important, then there are chances of heedlessness, but when it is as bad as worshipping idols, how did it spread among Muslims to this extent and no one forbid this wrong deed? If such an act was unlawful, how come the second Caliph – who was strict on such issues- did not destroy the tombs and the shrine of the Prophet (s) as soon as he conquered and entered *Bayt al Maqdis* and Syria, as the Wahhabis did? Why did Omar not perform his duty and destroy graves?

Indeed, this consensus is baseless and void and an innovation of this tribe. This unworthy idea has been taken from Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayem and added to their books. One of the Wahhabi authors called Sanani has realised this criticism and tried to answer it. He says:

"One can criticise it and say this is an affair that spread to all cities and covered the east and the west in such a way that there are no Islamic cities that do not have graves or shrines, and the wisdom of no Wiseman suggests this to be a wrong deed where Muslim scholars have observed silence..."

After mentioning this criticism, he regards the silence of scholars similar to the silence towards the governmental tax. He has stated that "...in their hearts the Muslim scholars disagreed with this but were not able to say anything."

The justification by Sanani is very weak since there is a great difference between the two issues. If the Wahhabis consider the ugliness and despicableness of this act the same as worshipping idols,

then it is not possible to justify silence towards polytheistic acts for one thousand and three hundred years by a foolish comparison. Their silence may have been because objection towards the tax paid to the government would have caused physical injuries to them, or, because the Sunni scholars were usually supported by the government and considered obeying them an obligation. But, they were not threatend in the case of constructing buildings over graves in any way, and so they had no reason to observe silence.

To say the least, this should have been objected to in the books of jurisprudence. What was stopping them from stating this while they had the ability to speak about the *Ashar* in jurisprudence books (the ruling for which is unlawful), what could have been the reason for the scholars not to specify unlawfulness and only write undesirability? Was it because if they had written "it is unlawful" some one would have objected? Basically the governments showed no sensitivity towards this matter and the clear evidence for this is the grave of the Prophet (s), and the grave of the two buried next to him under the roof and in the tomb. If this was unlawful, there would have been no roof or even a shade over these graves.

The answer to someone who may say that these two are different, and it is constructing buildings over a grave that is unlawful, we say that the mosque, the house, and the grave of the Prophet (s) were destroyed many times throughout history, including the time of Bani Omayyah and Bani 'Abbas, and everytime it was rebuilt with much more love and splendour.

The present building is from the time of the Othmanis and if there was any religious problem, the reconstruction would not have taken place again. Therefore, the claim of a consensus achieved on the practice of Muslims is unacceptable. We shall now anaylse the narration they have mentioned.

The second Wahhabi proof

The narration of Abi Al Hajaj according to *Sahih Muslim* is as follows:

"Yahya ibn Yahya, Abi Bakr ibn Abi Shabih and Zohair ibn Harb have quoted from Wakii, who quoted from Sofyan, who quoted from

Habib ibn Abi Thabit, who quoted from Abi Wael, who quoted Abi Al Hajaj Asadi say: "Ali ibn Abi Talib said to me: 'Shall I appoint you on something the Prophet (s) appointed me to? This was, not to leave any idol but destroy it, and not leave any bumpy grave but level it with the ground.

Like any other narration we must analyse this narration from two perspectives:

The evidence for the narration

The context of the narration

The names of a number of narrators must be carefully analysed. These include:

Wakii

Sofyan Thurii

Habib ibn Abi Thabit

Abu Wael Asadi

The above four people have been criticised and condemend in the Hadith and Rijal books. Ibn Hajar Asqalani is quoted to have said that Ahmad ibn Hanbal said about Wakii:

"Wakii has made five hundred mistakes and errors in quoting traditions."

He also quoted from Mohammad ibn Nasr Al Maruzi:

"Wakii used to read the traditions from the beginning to the end from memory and used to change the terms in the tradtions, and apparently quote the meaning (and not state the exact text). He was not a man of Arabic language either."

He quotes Ibn Mobarak saying about Sofyan Thurii:

"Sofyan quoted a tradition. I went to him and found that he was concealing the facts in the tradition. When he saw me he got embarrassed and was ashamed."

Also, when quoting the biography of Yahya Al Qatan he has said:

"Abu Bakr said: 'I hear Yahya say that Sofyan Thurii tried to introduce an unworthy and weak man as trustworthy, and tried to deceive men but failed."

He quotes Ibn Abban say about Habib ibn Thabit that:

"Habib used to conceal the facts in the traditions."

In *Kashf Al Irtiab* the Late Allamah Amini says about Ibn Wael:

"Ibn Wael became corrupted because of Ali (a). He held a grudge against him and was a hypocrite. This was because the Messenger of Allah (s) said: O Ali! No one loves you unless he is faithful and no one shows enmity towards you unless he is a hypocrite."

In his *Nahj Al Balagha* commentary, Ibn Abi Al Hadid said:

"One of those corrupted because of Ali (a) was Abu Wael, the brother of Ibn Salmi, who supported Uthman and used to bad mouth Ali (a), and it is said that he agreed with the Kharijites."

Even if such a person changed his view later, it is not possible to trust his Hadith quotations.

This is what *Kashf Al Irtiab* has said about Abi Al Hajaj, the narrator of this tradition:

"In the commentary of *Sunan Nisaee*, Suyuti says that in all the tradition books, this very tradition has only been narrated by Abi Al Hajaj."

So, a person who has quoted only one tradition is not trustworthy in hadith.

In the previous session we quoted the context of the narration from *Sahih Muslim*. This narration has also been quoted by Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Nisaee and many other narrators.

This event and the order of the Prophet (s) have been quoted in the narration from *Musnad* by Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

"Ali (a) is quoted to have said that the Messenger of Allah (s) was preparing for the burial ceremony of a corpse. He said: 'Which one of you will go to Madina and break all the idols and destroy graves, not leaving any behind, flatten all, and make all disappear? A man said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah (s).' And he left for Madina, but he got

scared of the people in Madina and returned. Then Ali (a) said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He left and after a while returned and said: 'O messenger of Allah! I did not leave any idols behind but broke them all, and I took care of all the graves and made all the faces on them disappear totally.'"

This narration has been quoted in several locations of Musnad ibn Hanbal and all have used the definition "and the Messenger of Allah (s) was in a burial ceremony," which shows that such an event took place in a burial ceremony.

This event is very controversial. The debate is whether this event took place in Mecca before migration or after migration, or, whether it is fundamentally related to Madina or not?

If the event is related to Mecca before migration, the possible criticisim is that the Prophet (s) had not formed a government and Islam did not have as much power, so there was no chance of issuing such an order. However, the context of the tradition shows a kind of power and rulership in a way that Ali (a) was able to do this without any problem.

Fa in *FanTalaqa*, *Fahab*, *Faraja,* as well as in *Faqala*, Ali: *Fan Talaqa Thoma Raja*, implies that these events took place continuously without any large intervals and this does not correspond to the hundreds of kilometeres distance between Mecca and Madina, since no matter how long the burial ceremony takes, it will not be as long as two return- journeys and performing of the mission.

However, if this event had taken place in Madina, there is a chance this event took place in one of the villages or even gardens around Madina in the early days of entering Madina by the Prophet (s), and his order was implemented because the Islamic government had been established. This probability is based on the assumption that in the beginning, not all the people of Madina had abandoned idols and become Muslims. They gradually left idols and turned to Islam. However the esoteric meaning of the tradition indicates that this event took place in the outskirts of Madina.

This statement is a part of the first tradition we quoted from *Sahih Muslim* in the previous session:

"Do not leave any shrine unless you have taken care of it".

The following definition is observed in the second narration:

"He may not leave behind any grave unless he has taken care of it."

In the saying of Ali (a) we can see "no grave unless it is taken care of" which has the same meaning. We must first see what the word *Mushref* in the first narration and *Taswiyah* in the second narration mean. *Mushref* means a tall and long place and *sharafa* means the camels hump.

Therefore *mushref* is either absolutely longevity or a certain hump like that of a camel. Taking into consideration the lingual usage, we can say that a *mushref* grave is a hump- like grave in the form of a *Tasnim*. The sayings of Sunni scholars regard the *Tasnim* on a grave recommended. This is the view point of the three schools of thought except the Shafe'i. Therefore, the definition for a *Mushref* grave does not point to any height from the ground but rather to the hump of the grave.

The other definition observed in both the narrations is *Sawayto* the base for which is *Taswiyah*. The definition of *Istawa Al Makan* is to balance and *Sawaytu* means balance that place and make it equal to the ground.

Also in *Aqrab Al Mawarid* it is said:

He levelled it (with the ground). Considering the above definition it is clear that *Taswiyah* means making equal, level and even. The meaning of levelling the grave is flattening and levelling the bulge of the grave in such a way that the grave is parallel to the ground.

It is clear that the meaning of *Mushref* is not any height from the ground. It is the bulge that has been criticised and ordered to flatten. Therefore, assuming the correctness of quotation and ascription of narration to the Prophet (s) and Ali (a), and ignoring the evidential faults of the narration, *Taswiyah* of grave means flattening its bulge, commonly known as the back of the fish, but it never means destroying it.

The view of Sunni researchers

Accompanying this meaning is the saying of Sunni researchers including Ibn Hajar Asqalani who said in *Kitab Al Rishad Al Sarri*, the commentary on *Sahih Bukhari*:

Using valid evidences, Abu Da'ud narrated from Qasim ibn Mohammad ibn Abi Bakr: "I went to Ayesha and said: 'Show me the grave of the Prophet (s) and the other two graves. She did so; and I saw those graves did not bulge and were not as flat as the soil, that is, they were not at the same level as the ground.'"

After mentioning this event, Asqalani concludes:

"Flattening the bulge of the grave is preferred. However, since it is a tradition among Shias to flatten and level the grave, there is the probability that to avoid being like the Shia, a group of Sunnis abandoned this recommended act. The saying on flattening graves is a Rafidhi slogan, but it does not stop preferring flat graves since an act should not be abandoned because it agrees with the way of people of innovation (in religion), and the saying of Ali (a) does not contradict this meaning. He said: 'The Messenger of Allah (s) ordered me to flatten every bulgy grave.' What the Prophet (s) meant was not levelling the grave with the ground. He meant flattening and getting rid of the bulge, and this is what the collection of traditions suggests."

If you focus on the last part of his saying you will see that even though he has regarded Shias as 'Rafidhis and people of innovation', he interprets this tradition reasonably and logically and rejects the wrong understanding of the tradition and says: "What is meant by *Sawaytu* is not destroying it, but flattening it."

In conclusion, this tradition gives no indication of levelling the grave with the ground and the verdict of the four schools of thought definitely recommends having a height from the ground for the grave, and this narration only suggests that the grave must not be in the shape of the back of a fish or the camel's hump. It must be levelled and flattened.

The Sunni scholars agree with the definition we have given for this narration. Today, we shall quote other narrations that endorse the same understanding.

1– When explaining *wa la qabran ila sawaytu*, Nawawi says:

"The custom is not to make the grave at a towering height from the ground which will make it look like a camel's hump, but make it at a span's height from the ground on a flat surface, and this is what the Shafe'i and his followers say. Qadi 'Iyad says: "The majority of scholars prefer *Tasnim* (like the camel's hump) of the grave, and this is what the Maliki school of thought says.

Therefore, Nawawi has not used this narration to state the obligation on destroying graves.

2– It is observed that the text in *Sahih Muslim* has used the title *The chapter on Taswiyah of grave*, which shows that the author of this book has not deduced the obligation of destroying graves from this narration otherwise he would have used the title, *The chapter on destroying graves*.

3– The title used in Sahih Tirmidhi is: The chapter on what has come on levelling graves.

As you can see, the tradition narrators such as Muslim, Tirmidhi and the commentators of tradition books including the commentators of *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* have also perceived the same meaning from this narration and do not regard levelling the grave as destroying it. Thus such a view is contrary with the belief and ruling of all schools of thought since we said all the schools of thought believe that it is recommended to elevate the grave at a span's height.

Thus you can see the Wahhabi's view explicitily disagrees with the view of the five schools of thought, including the Shia, and this void and weak ruling is only an excuse to destroy the buildings made over the graves of the pure Imam (a) in Baqi' as well as the other graves that are in authority of this corrupt sect.

The third Wahhabi proof

The third issue is buildings over graves in charitable legacy lands will prevent others from using it and this means usurping others' rights, thus destroying graves is obligatory.

Is Baqi' a charitable legacy?

Basically, every land or house is not a charitable legacy. As said in principles of jurisprudence sciences, before becoming a charitable endownment it must be the property of some one, thus, unless man is the owner of a property he can not make it a charitable endowment. Since the claim on the charitable endownmency of Baqi' disagrees with the first principle, it will not be acceptable unless it is proved through at least two witnesses.

Now the question is; after one thousand and three hundred and forty plus years, how did they become certain that Baqi' was a charitable endownment? If one says the reason of charitable endownmency of this land is being a graveyard, we must say that this is in no way true. It is possible for people to place a religiously lawful and barren, uncultivated land as the graveyard for people without the ownership of any body who shall make it a charitable endownment in the future.

The other point that is clarified is that, on one hand, the charitable endownmency and ownership of Baqi' has not been proved, and on the other, most certainly the buildings over graves were constructed by people as a means of revering the grave owners especially the family of the Prophet (s), and it was the property of the constructors. Considering their intention of spending their property in the way of Allah (swt), the charitable endownmency of these buildings comes forward. Therefore, these buildings were the properties of those owners and not only was the invasion and destruction of these building not obligatory, it was unlawful and usurpury and oppression.

Therefore, after one thousand and three hundred and forty four years after the beginning of Islam, the reason, proof of the charitably endownmecy of Baqi' has not been uncovered for which the buildings over graves were destroyed.

The history of Baqi'

According to historical evidence, the Baqi' land was a barren land filled with small tress and various other big trees, especially the Gharghad tree that grew by itself in large numbers. Therefore, this land was famous as *Baqi' Al Gharghad* and later on, the term *Gharghad* was removed and only the term Baqi' was pronounced,

which shows that since the beginning Baqi' was an uncultivated land and not owned by anyone. In addition to this the books written on the history of Madina by people, including Samhudi, say:

"Qodamah ibn Musa has been quoted by Ibn Shoabah to have said that Baqi' was filled with desert trees (Gharghad) and when Uthman ibn Madhun passed away they buried him in Baqi' and after that they chopped the Gharghad from there.

"Qodamah ibn Musa has quoted Ibn Zubalah to have said that the first person buried in Baqi' by the Prophet (s) was Uthman ibn Madhun. Abu Ghassan has quoted from Abi Salman ibn Abd Arahman, who quoted from his father that, when Ibrahim, the son of the Messenger of Allah (s) passed away, he ordered his burial next to Uthman ibn Madhun."

Therefore, originally, Baqi' was not a grave yard, and the people became inclined to use it after the death of Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet (s), and each tribe made a section exclusive to itself. No one knows if this section was owned or not. Being a barren, uncultivated land filled with self growing *Gharghad* trees, it was most probably not owned by anyone. In the quotation on Baqi', there are no references to making *Baqi'* a charitable endownment by the Prophet (s) or any body else. And the only ownership was that every tribe had chosen a part for burying their dead and made buildings and tombs over graves in that part, as the grave of 'Abbas ibn Abd al Muttalib:

"'Abbas ibn Abd Al Mutalib was buried next to the grave of Fatima bint Asad (the mother of Ali (a)). At the beginning the graves of Bani Hashim were in *Dar Al Aqil*."

This statement clearly shows that Bani Hashim had selected a section of Baqi' for themselves and built roofs and buildings on it. This was why they called that section *Dar Al Aqil* (the house of Aqil).

Assuming we accept *Baqi'* was a charitable endownment, the question is: Who says the endownmency had the condition of only having the right for one grave on which a shade, tomb, or mosque was allowed to be built? Who can prove that constructing buildings over graves was usurpury and oppression towards others when the term *Dar Al Aqil* shows that during that time, there were rooms and buildings over the graves of Bani Hashim, and even other tribes had

their own special buildings. This can be proved through various narrations about *Baqi'*.

The fourth Wahhabi proof: Prohibition of constructing buildings over graves in a narration

The fourth proof Wahhabis mention for destroying the graves are some narrations, including the one Jabir has quoted from the Messenger of Allah (s). This narration has been quoted through various routes and using various terms. Here we shall quote this narration from *Sahih Muslim*.

Abu BAkr ibn Abi Shabih quoted from Hafs ibn Ghaybah who quoted from Ibn Jurjy who quoted from Abi Al Zubair who said: "Jabir said that the Prophet (s) used to prohibit plasterwork on graves, sitting on graves, and making constructions over it."

The evidence of this narration must be analyzed. This narration has also been quoted in other *Sahihs*. In the evidence of the majority of quotations the names of two people, who are extremely weak in quoting, is observed:

Ibn Juraij

Abi al-Zubair

The name of Abi Zubair is the only name in some quotations. Traditionists say the following about these two people.

"I asked about the tradition of Ibn Jurjy from Yahya ibn Sa'id. He said: 'They are weak.' I said: 'Ibn Jurjy said a certain person informed him.' He replied: "Ignore it, all his narrations are weak."

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal says: "When Ibn Jurjy says the Xperson said this or the Xperson said that, or he has been informed, he is saying unreliable words."

Imam Malik ibn Anas says:

"Imam Jurjy is akin to the man collecting fire twigs at night."

This saying is an ironical way of saying he collects and quotes whatever he gets his hands on without due consideration.

Dar Qutni said:

"Beware of the deceit of Ibn Jurjy as he uses ugly deceit and only deceit in the narrations that he has heard from a weak and questionable person."

Deceit in tradition means the narrator narrates the tradition he has heard in such a way that the listener or reader assumes there were no intermediaries. In other words, he deletes the intermediary, and says: 'Zeid read the tradition on... when he has not heard it from Zeid.' Dar Qutni is alarmed that Ibn Jurjy has such an undesirable character.

At times the intermediary is a creditable person where not mentioning the name will cause no harm or damage to the narration and will not make it weak. However, if this act is performed on a weak narrator who has been criticised by traditionists, it will become ugly and deceitful, because, by deleting the weak intermediary, the narrator is making a not reliable transmission a correct one. This invalid tradition will then be made the criterion for action, and thus Dar Qutni has introduced him as a deceitful man who uses the second form of deceit (in tradition).

In the traditionists' (Rijal) books, Abu Al Zubair has also been discussed. This is how Abdullah ibn Ahmad quotes Ayyub about Abi Al Zubair from Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

"I asked my father: 'Did Ayyub regard Abi Zubair weak in quoting narrations?' He said: 'Yes.'"

Shoabah said about him:

"There was no one more beloved to me than the one who came and informed me of Abi Zubair. I then left for Mecca to attend his gathering and heard traditions from him. While I was sitting with him, a man came and asked a question [but was not satisfied with the answer from Abi Zubair] and rejected his saying. Abi Zubair became angry and abused him. I said: 'O Abi Zubair! Are you making accusations towards a Muslim man?' He replied: 'He made me angry.' I said: 'Do you level accusations towards any one who makes you angry? I will no longer quote any tradition from you.'"

While objecting to one of the narrators, Sho'bah said:

"Are you collecting traditions from Abi Zubair when he does not even perform the prayer properly?"

Therefore, the description of these two people makes the evidence of the narration weak, and such a narration cannot be trusted and used as a base to issue rulings. The Sunni scholars have not acted upon these narrations and not given any rulings according to them.

Analyzing the content in Jabir's narration

The text of this narration is shaky and has been quoted in various forms. The text we read was in *Sahih Muslim* and *Sunan Abi Da'ud*. The context of narrations in other books is as follows:

"The Messenger of Allah (s) prohibited plasterwork writings on constructions as well as walking on graves."

This is what *Sunan Nisaee* says: "The Messenger of Allah (s) prohibited plasterwork on graves as well as sitting on them.

This narration has been quoted in Sunni narration books with a slight difference. Those narrators who have quoted these narrations have all quoted from this group who quoted it from Jabir and it is very unlikely that there are different versions. Surely, if the narrators were numerous, there was a chance of having separate narrations in each case, however, it must be said that this narration is one with shaky evidence. In addition, these narrations were not acted upon by the Muslims, who contructed buildings over graves and wrote over them.

The other issue is that this narration mentions prohibition by the Prophet (s). Prohibition is of two types: a forbidding prohibition and an undesirability prohibition. Thus prohibition in this narration, is perceived as undesirable.

However, when a narration orders an act and another narration gives the permission for abandoning it, the order will be regarded as a recommended act. Similarly, if an act is prohibited in some narrations and given the permission in another, the prohibited act is regarded as an undesirable one. The critics might say that unless there are proofs of undesirability, the prohibition by the Messenger of Allah (s) must be regarded as unlawful.

The response to this is:

In case the scholars have given the verdict of a recommended act or an undesirable one, and the esoteric meaning suggests obligation or

unlawfulness, the united verdict of scholars on recommendation or undesirability will cause abandoning the esoteric of the narration. As an example, our narrations continuously order Friday *Ghusul* (washing) and have even included the term *Wajib* (obligatory). However, the scholars have not acted upon this exoteric, and not given the obligation verdict on *Ghusul.*

Surely the reason for the removal of doubt is clear since the ruling of scholars reveals that in the time of the Pure Imams (a) and the times near it, they had specific evidential clues based on which they would regard an act as recommended or prohibited, since the care and obedience that Muslim scholars showed in acting upon the religious rulings, most certainly they would not have disregarded the exoteric meaning of the Word of Allah (swt) or the Messenger of Allah (s) or the pure Imams (a) without any reason.

There are narration in other narration books e.g. by Kolaini, Sadooq, that even the authors have not given the ruling based on them, which shows that the narration had a fault, or some evidential clues might have caused them to disregard it.

In case of this narration, we see that the scholars of the four schools of thought have given the ruling on undesirability of building over graves, even though they have quoted this very narration and their disagreement, where they said:

"It is *undesirable* to build a house, tomb or school or a mosque over a grave."

All four Sunni scholars near in time to the issuing of this verdict gave the ruling on *undesirability*. Thus, assuming the narration was issued by the Prophet (s), and there was negligence in the evidential faults, shows that they had some proof contrary to unlawfulness in their hands, otherwise they would not have abandondend the evidence of the narration without any reason.

Mentioning this narration in books of tradition under the title of *undesirability*

In addition to what we said before, they have mentioned this narration in a chapter under the title of *undesirability* and not the title the

unlawfulness of building over graves. Tirmidhi has used the title *The undesirability of buildings over graves*, in his *Sahih*.

The commentators of *Sunan Ibn Majeh* have said that this narration has not been acted upon because the Muslim way was writing over graves.

Nawawi, the commentator of *Sahih Muslim* has also quoted this tradition and used the title *The undesirability of plaster work and building over graves and making sitting over graves unlawful.* You can see that he has used the term *undesirability,* for plaster work and building over graves, and the term *making unlawful,* sitting over graves. Naturally in their view, the Sunni scholars have used care when chosing the titles and not just used any title without considering the meaning.

"The undesirability of plasterwork and buildings over graves and making sitting over graves unlawful is part of the Shafiite school of thought and agreed upon by the scholars...."

Sitting over graves and leaning on them is regarded as a form of disrespect to the grave-owner, and, assuming the correctness of these traditions, they are a valid reason why the graves of the faithful must be respected and no one should be disrespectful and impudent towards them.

This is what he says in continuation about building over graves:

"Building over graves, if it is in the property of the grave- owner, is undesirable, and if it is in a charitable endowment graveyard, it is unlawful. This is according to the exact text by Shafe'i and his companions."

Therefore, the answer in brief is that firstly, the evidence for the tradition is faulty; secondly, the main scholars of the Sunii school of thought have used this narration to derive undesirability and none have given the ruling on unlawfulness.

Analysing similar traditions

There are other similar traditions quoted which must be investigated further:

1– This is what Ibn Majeh quotes:

"Mohammad ibn Yahyah informed us that Mohammad ibn Abdullah Raqashi informed Wahhab that Abd Al Rahman ibn Yazid ibn Jabir informed Al Qasim ibn Mokhaymarah that Abi Sa'id said: the Prophet (s) prohibited building over graves."

2 and 3– There are two other traditions that both originate from Omme Salamah quoted through Ahmad ibn Hanbal which are actually one tradition, and it is as follows:

"Omme Salamah is quoted to have said: The Messenger of Allah (s) prohibited building or plaster work over graves."

B) Omme Salamah said: "Truly, the Messenger of Allah (s) prohibited plaster work or building or sitting over graves."

These two traditions have been quoted by ibn Majeh and Ahmad ibn Hanbal and there are faults with their evidences. This is because the evidence of Ibn Majeh contains the name of a person called Wahhab. This name is common between seventeen narrators and it is not clear which one of them this is, and since there are numerous liars and forgerers among these seventeen people, clouds of doubt appear in the trustworthiness of Wahhab and thus the creditability of the narration lessens.

The name of Ibn Lohayah is observed in the evidence of the second narration with has been slated in *Mizan Al Eetidal* and *Tahdhid Al Tahdhib* including the following sentence:

"Ibn Moein says: Ibn Lohayah is weak and it is not possible to use his tradtions as proof."

Also people such as Yahyah ibn Sa'id have said the following about him:

"Hamidi is quoted by Bukhari to have said that Yahya ibn Sa'id did not consider any respect for Abdullah ibn Lohayah."

Thus the evidence for the above narrations is faulty.

Application wise, the understanding from the first narration is also true for the second one. Even though Ahmad ibn Hanbal has quoted this narration himself, he has issued the verdict of undesirability, and as we said this is also the view among our scholars. For example,

Sheikh Tousi or the Late Mufid or Sadooq do quote a narration even when their ruling is not according to it.

Up to now we analysed four narrations: the narration of Abi Al Hajaj, the narration by Jabir, and the two recent narrations. We also highlighted their evidential faults and when analysing their text, it will become clear that they do not, in any way, apply to what the Wahhabis claim. Such forms of narrations where not acted upon until the time of Ibn Taymiyyah, and none of the scholars have given the verdict on their unlawfulness, but the majority have issued verdicts of undesirability on constructing buildings over graves.

Construction and repair of buildings over the graves of the Prophets is a divine ritual

Even if we consider the evidence for the tradition to be correct and regard this act as unlawful, a different title applies to the case of the graves of the Prophet (s), the saints, the scholars, and the martyrs of Islam, and we can even say that building over the graves of the Pure Imams (a) and erudite is not only not undesirable, it may even be required and necessary for many reasons.

Anlaysing theological aspect

To explain this, we must first discuss an important and vital issue in the field of deriving the rulings which are the five rulings of; obligation, unlawfulness, recommendation, undesirability or permissibility, naturally applicable to an act. However, on the emerging of a special title, it loses its first natural ruling and another ruling applies to it. In other words, the first ruling loses its feat and the new ruling becomes feasible. For example eating dead flesh is Haram (unlawful) and the reason for it is the verse:

﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْمَيْتَةُ وَٱلدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ ٱلْخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ بِهِۦ وَٱلْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَٱلْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَٱلْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَٱلنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَآ أَكَلَ ٱلسَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى ٱلنُّصُبِ وَأَن تَسْتَقْسِمُواْ بِٱلْأَزْلَـٰمِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ۗ ٱلْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ ٱلَّذِينَ

كَفَرُواْ مِن دِينِكُمۡ فَلَا تَخۡشَوۡهُمۡ وَٱخۡشَوۡنِۚ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ أَكۡمَلۡتُ لَكُمۡ دِينَكُمۡ وَأَتۡمَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ نِعۡمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمَ دِينٗاۚ فَمَنِ ٱضۡطُرَّ فِي مَخۡمَصَةٍ غَيۡرَ مُتَجَانِفٖ لِّإِثۡمٖۙ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ﴾

"You are prohibited carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and what has been offered to other than Allah, and the animal strangled or beaten to death, and that which dies by falling or is gored to death, and that which is mangled by a beast of prey barring that which you may purify and what is sacrificed on stone altars] to idols [, and that you should divide by raffling with arrows. All that is transgression. Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion. But should anyone be compelled by hunger, without inclining to sin, then Allah is indeed all-forgiving, all-merciful."[1]

However, at times the term "emergency" or "loath" appears in certain situation. For example a situation in which a person has only access to dead flesh to save his life, or he is being forced by a group to eat dead flesh. In such cases, a different title becomes applicable to this act and unlawfulness loses its feat and the lawfulness of eating dead flesh and even obligation of it becomes feasible. This is because sometimes the consequence of not eating is death and to save the self, the dead flesh must be eaten.

Another example: sometimes an act is permissible in its nature. However, it coincides with the term "cooperate" or "sponsoring sin" and, as a result, the unlawfulness ruling replaces the permissibility ruling. For example, according to the verse

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَأۡكُلُونَ ٱلرِّبَوٰاْ لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ ٱلَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ مِنَ ٱلۡمَسِّۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمۡ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّمَا ٱلۡبَيۡعُ مِثۡلُ ٱلرِّبَوٰاْۗ وَأَحَلَّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلۡبَيۡعَ وَحَرَّمَ

1. *Surah al-Ma'edah* Chapter 5, verse 3.

ٱلرِّبَوٰاْۚ فَمَن جَآءَهُۥ مَوۡعِظَةٞ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ فَٱنتَهَىٰ فَلَهُۥ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمۡرُهُۥٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِۖ وَمَنۡ عَادَ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِۖ هُمۡ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴾

"Those who exact usury will not stand but like one deranged by the Devil's touch. That is because they say," Trade is just like usury," whereas, Allah has allowed trade and forbidden usury. Whoever, on receiving advice from his Lord, relinquishes [usury] shall keep [the gains of]what is past, and his matter shall rest with Allah. As for those who resume, they shall be the inmates of the Fire and they shall remain in it (forever)."[1]

Selling grapes is lawful. However, selling grapes to the one who makes wine out of it, is sponsoring him in his sin, and thus the new ruling, which is, unlawfulness of selling becomes feasible. In other words, the lawfulness ruling was its natural ruling which has transformed to a requisite ruling (what is required) that is if selling grapes is not sponsoring sin it is lawful, otherwise its present ruling will be unlawfulness.

There are other examples that can be mentioned. For example if reading Nafilah (daily extra prayer) or the night prayer or a recommended fast is causing irritation to the parents in such a way that they prohibit it, it loses its recommendability, which is its primary and natural ruling, and will become unlawful. Thus an act has a natural ruling but other titles emerging out of it will cause its ruling to change. There are numerous titles that can emerge on an act like: sponsoring sin, emergency, reluctance, loss, impediment, the order or prohibition of parents, etc...

In general the rulings that apply to the nature of an act are called "primary rulings," and its titles and subjects are called "primary titles." The rulings that are titled secondary and accidentally apply to the act are known as "secondary rulings," and the accidental titles are known as "secondary titles."

Now we shall go back to the issue of buildings over graves. If we assume that buildings over graves is undesirable based on the primary

1. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 275.

ruling, there exists a secondary title in the case of the graves of the Prophets (a), saints and the religious erudite, which is, respecting religious symbols. This means construction over the graves of the Prophet (a), the saints and the Pure Imams (a) will go under the title of respecting the symbols, and is not only building over a grave. Respecting rituals is a necessary, preponderant affair, and a sign of piety, as said in the following noble verse:

﴿ذَٰلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَـٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى ٱلْقُلُوبِ﴾

"That and whoever venerates the sacraments of Allah indeed, that arises from the God wariness of hearts."[1]

In order to explain this issue we must first prove that respecting the graves of the Prophets (a) and saints is respecting religious symbols and for this we must focus on the meanings of the word *Shaer,* in the above mentioned noble verse.

Shaer is the plural of *Shaerah*, which means signs and symbols. Therefore, *Shaeerallah* in the above verse, means signs and symbols of Allah (swt). Surely all the creatures and beings are divine signs and symbols as said in the holy Quran:

﴿إِنَّ فِى خَلْقِ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱخْتِلَـٰفِ ٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ لَأَيَـٰتٍ لِّأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَلْبَـٰبِ﴾

"Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those who possess intellects."[2]

Therefore, every creature is a sign of Allah (swt): "and in every object is His sign." What we mean by the above mentioned verse is that respecting any creature is not a sign of piety in the heart; it should be an emblem or sign of Allah's (swt) religion. The holy Quran has stated some of the signs of Allah (swt) and we can derive a

1. *Surah al-Haj*, Chapter 22, verse 32.
2. *Surah Al Imran*, Chapter 3, verse 190.

general rule and understand the correct meaning of Divine signs. Among these are the *Safa* and *Marwah*:

﴿إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلۡمَرۡوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ ٱللَّهِۖ فَمَنۡ حَجَّ ٱلۡبَيۡتَ أَوِ ٱعۡتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَاۚ وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيۡرٗا فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"Indeed Safa and Marwah are among Allah's sacraments. So whoever makes Hajj to the House, or performs the Umrah, there is no sin upon him to circuit between them. Should anyone do good of his own accord, then Allah is indeed appreciative, all-knowing."[1]

The other example is the sacrifice brought along in *Al Hajj al Qiran* (the joined Hajj) which is also a sign of Allah and has special customs. Among those is hanging a special collar on the neck of the sacrifice so that it is clear that the camel being led in front has been brought to Hajj to be sacrificed. This is what the holy Quran says about this:

﴿وَٱلۡبُدۡنَ جَعَلۡنَٰهَا لَكُم مِّن شَعَٰٓئِرِ ٱللَّهِ لَكُمۡ فِيهَا خَيۡرٞۖ فَٱذۡكُرُواْ ٱسۡمَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡهَا صَوَآفَّۖ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتۡ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُواْ مِنۡهَا وَأَطۡعِمُواْ ٱلۡقَانِعَ وَٱلۡمُعۡتَرَّۚ كَذَٰلِكَ سَخَّرۡنَٰهَا لَكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَشۡكُرُونَ﴾

"We have appointed for you the [sacrificial] camels as one of Allah's sacraments. There is good for you in them. So mention the Name of Allah over them as they stand. And when they have fallen on their flanks, eat from them, and feed the self-contained needy and the mendicant. Thus have We disposed them for your benefit so that you may give thanks."[2]

Considering the mentioned cases, it is clear that the Signs of Allah (swt) are the objects and creatures that remind man of Him. The pacing back and forth between *Safa* and *Marwa* is one of the Hajj rituals and at the same time revives the scene of an Islamic icon. The

1. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 158.
2. *Surah al-Hajj*, Chapter 22, verse 36.

sacrificing camel is one of the symbols demonstrates the servitude and sincerity of Muslims, because they are obeying Allah (swt) and sacrificing the camel for His sake; and, since it is a reminder of the sincere act of Ibrahim (a) sacrificing Isma'il (a), it has been included as one of the Islamic rituals.

﴿لَن يَنَالَ ٱللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلَٰكِن يَنَالُهُ ٱلتَّقۡوَىٰ مِنكُمۡۚ كَذَٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمۡ لِتُكَبِّرُواْ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمۡۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ﴾

"It is not their flesh or their blood that reaches Allah. Rather it is your God wariness that reaches Him. Thus, has He disposed them for your benefit, so that you may magnify Allah for His guiding you, and give good news to the virtuous."[1]

The Divine symbols must be treated with respect and honour, as the noble verse says those who respect the divine symbols are people with piety in their heart, and praises them:

﴿ذَٰلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمۡ شَعَٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقۡوَى ٱلۡقُلُوبِ﴾

"And whoever venerates the sacraments of Allah, indeed, that arises from the God wariness of hearts."[2]

All the rituals in Hajj, such as, the circumbulation, the stay in *Arafat, Mashar* and *Mina* are Divine symbols. Friday and the congregation prayers are also among the symbols.

Graves of Prophets (a) and Saints are Divine symbols

Now that the meaning of Divine symbols has became clear, it is possible to appreciate that the great Prophets (a), saints, pious people, and martyrs, are all Divine symbols. These people devoted their lives to propagating religion and bringing people near Allah (swt), thus, tools for getting close to Allah (swt). Respecting their graves is as obligatory as respecting their actions during their life since, they are divine symbols.

1. *Surah al-Hajj*, Chapter 22, verse 37.
2. *Surah al-Hajj*, Chapter 22, verse 32.

You see people remembering Allah (swt) when next to the grave of the Prophet (s), Ali (a), Imam Hussain (a) and the rest of the Pure Imams (a) and paying respect to the graves of the scholars and the erudite who have a connection with religion and Allah (swt), and have made certain sacrifices in the way of Allah (swt) through which they have tried to remind and bring people nearer to Allah (swt). This attitude of people shows that they regard them as Divine signs and symbols.

How is it possible that the camel to be sacrificed is a symbol of servitude to Allah (swt) and a Divine symbol, but the Prophets (a) and saints who are the chosen ones of Allah (swt) not be one of the Divine symbols?

As soon as the sacrifice camel is chosen, it must be respected. It can no longer be ridden upon and it must move before the Hajj group since it is the tool for nearness to Allah (swt). *Safa* and *Marwah* are also inanimate bodies. But as long as they are a tool and a place for nearness to Allah (swt) and counted as one of the Divine Symbols, they must be respected.

People orient their minds towards Allah (swt) and seek nearness to Him through tears and cries by the graves of the Prophets (a), saints, scholars and pious people, so these graves carry the secondary ruling and title and must necessarily be respected. Therefore, showing respect to these graves in any way, whether by constructing buildings, repairing their graves, making shrines, tombs and mosques around them, is a preferred and worthy act, rather, necessary and crucial. Therefore, assuming that the first ruling being the undesirability of buildings over graves is correct, in such cases this ruling is removed and replaced by necessity or even recommendation (of this act).

Venerating these noble graves through establishing proper places around them will cause nearness of people to Allah (swt) through congregrational visits, supplications, prayers with tears, in these places. Now, if these traces of Divine symbols are destroyed, are not people deprived of one of the tools of nearness to Allah (swt)? Is it not an act of disrespect and scorn towards the Divine symbols?

If you think about it you will realise that all the tribes and nations in the world, whether past or present, honor their erudite, and after their

death treat their graves with respect by building shrines and tombs around them. This is not exclusive to religious characters. This is how non-religious characters and political characters are treated and it is not regarded as an immoral act. It is only the Wahhabis in the whole world who are against venerating graves, otherwise, Muslims, Christian, Jews, and even nations that do not have a divine religion or are atheists respect and esteem those characters that have in any way affected the fate and progress of people.

In Pakistan, the grave of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is venerated because he was a political leader. The grave of Allama Iqbal is also respected and it will not be accepted by any one that it should be destroyed.

Constructing buildings over graves has also been regarded as a normal affair in the story of As'habi Kahf (the people of the cave). As'habe Kahf were a group of a people who became weary of the oppression and agnosticism of the rulers of their time and sought refuge in a cave. They fell asleep in that cave, and according to Quran, stayed in that cave for three hundred and nine years. When they woke up, one of them took some money and went to the city to buy some food. He saw that people had abandoned atheism and the time was a different age. Seeing his money, the attention of people got focused on him and they realized that he was no ordinary person and was carrying money that belonged to three hundred years ago. People then remembered the group who had got lost and realised that they were alive. As soon as people realised that they were the people of the cave who had left their city fighting oppression, agnostism and atheism of the rulers, they saw it necessary to make a building in that very cave in their memory. The Holy Quran mentions their story in detail and says:

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ وَعْدَ ٱللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ ٱلسَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَآ إِذْ يَتَنَٰزَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ ۖ فَقَالُواْ ٱبْنُواْ عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَٰنًا ۖ رَّبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ ۚ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ غَلَبُواْ عَلَىٰٓ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا﴾

"So it was that We let them come upon them, that they might know that Allah's promise is true, and that there is no doubt in the Hour. As they were disputing among themselves about their matter, they said," Build a building over them. Their Lord knows them best." Those who had the say in their matter said," We will set up a place of worship over them.""[1]

One group thought that only buildings, such as memorials are allowed, but since the people of the cave had migrated for the sake of their faith, their act had a divine aspect, so some others believed that their place was holy and must be turned into a mosque.

Disrespecting the dead is against human nature

People, no matter of which culture or tradition, do not permit disrespecting the dead. Disrespecting normal graves is a crime, let alone the grave of the Prophets (a), Pure Imams (a) and saints, and the dead who passed away ten years ago.

Sometimes,it is necessary to destroy old graveyards in order to make roads etc. People object to it and show their annoyance. Also, when a grave is destroyed or a bone comes out of a grave, people find themselve obliged to bury and cover it again. This is the obligation people feel towards normal graves, let alone the graves of the Prophets (a) and saints, which carry a special form of respect.

We read some narrations before that said it is recommended to have the grave at a span's height. This might have been so that people could see the grave and not walk over it. Also some scholars have regarded plaster work and building over graves as undesirable, but sitting or leaning on graves as unlawful, because it is considered as showing disrespect to the dead.

1. *Surah al-Kahf,* Chapter 18, verse 21.

The rulings for washing the dead body, shrouding (*Takfin*), applying Camphor on the dead body, the prayer, escorting the funeral, the burial and the other recommendations are all signs of the respect that Islam pays to it, otherwise it could have said the dead human body is an object and should be thrown in the desert for the animals to eat.

Even the tribes who burn their dead in a special ceremony regard this act a form of paying respect to the dead. Those who place the dead in a grave do not consider disrespecting it permissible even after one hundred years.

There is no special form of showing disrespect; it is enough to leave the grave of the Prophet (s) and Allah's saints in such a way that they become the passageway of man and animals, or a dump. This would most certainly be disrespectful, and certainly not permissible. We must prevent it and the only way is to make walls or a building around the grave.

Examples of Muslims' Dealing with the Graves of Prophets and Saints

A glance at the history of Islam regarding graves

1– During the time of Omar ibn Khattab, when Muslims conquered *Bayt-al- Maqdis*, they came across the grave of the Prophets (a); the grave of Ibrahim (s) in Alkhalil, and the graves of Ishaq, Ya'qub, Da'ud and Yusuf and Musa (peace be upon them all) and the other Prophets (a) and saints, which had massive and imaculate buildings. If a building over graves was unlawful, these buildings would have been destroyed by the Muslims. Not only did the Muslims not destroy anything; they repaired and renewed these buildings after settling in these lands.

After conquering polytheist's lands, Muslims would burn and destroy idols and fire temples, but in *Bayt al Maqdis*, even at the peak of power they did not destroy the graves.

Ibn Taymiyyah has also confessed to this and stressed upon it in the book *Sirat Al Mustaqim*. The late Sayyid Mohsin Hakim quotes him to have said:

"Ibn Taymiyyah says in his *Sirat Al Mustaqim*: 'There was a building on the grave of Ibrahim *Khalil ullah* (a) at the time of conquering *Bayt al Maqdis* but the door to that building was closed until the year 400."

We do not care about the door being open or closed, what we are discussing is whether it is permissible to make buildings over graves or not. Ibn Taymiyyah confessed that this building was there from before and it remained up to the time of the companions and even 400 years after them.

Now the question is: Why weren't the graves of the Prophets (a) and those buildings destroyed during all this time? Why were the shrines and buildings still standing until the Muslims invaded the land, and no one had the slightest objection to them? If buildings over graves

were prohibited and this prohibition implied unlawfulness, why didn't the companions take any action when they saw these buildings standing? The Wahhabis regard the acts of the companions as proof, so, what is their proof here? The companions are not even quoted to have ever said that this act is one of the wrong acts (Munkar).

2– All the Shia and Sunni historians and traditionists believe that the Prophet (s) was buried in his house – in the room he used to live with Ayesha- and after him, Abu bakr and Omar were also buried there. The question is: If this act was unlawful and prohibited by the Prophet (s), why did they bury the Prophet (s) and those two people under a roof and in that building? This single, important act shows that placing the grave in a building was not unlawful to them.

Is building over a grave different to burying in a building?

To avoid criticism, some of their authors have said that it is building over a grave that is unlawful and the companions buried the Prophet (s) in a building. They did not make a building over his grave, and burying the dead in a building that exists, is allowed.

We have a few questions:

First question: Is it permissible to make a tomb for the faithful and the scholar before their death so they get buried in it after they die? Do Wahhabis allow such an act? They most certainly do not permit it. It would not make any difference if the building was there before or is built afterwards. In practice, Wahhabis do not see any difference and do not let the tomb be made first so that the body is buried in it later on. However, since the criticism of the other party must somehow be answered they just give a reply that they do not themselves practice.

Second question: Did they research before destroying to see whether they were built after the making of the grave, and was it proven to them that they were? Or they did not research at all and destroyed them knowing these buildings were there before the graves were made?

Assuming that building over graves is unlawful, according to jurisprudence, these buildings were probably there from before, because a Muslims will not perform such an unlawful act. Therefore,

in all the cases the buildings were there from before and the bodies were buried later.

There were statements that showed a burial place such as *Dar Al Aqil* that existed from before, and bodies were later buried in it. There were other places such as *Dar Al Aqil* in which others used to bury their dead. Therefore, if the act is correct then, apparently in the Muslim state, the evidence confirms the existence of the buildings before burial.

Third question: Is only building over a grave that is unlawful or is the rest of the building also unlawful? If a house is built in someone else's property, building it and living in that house are both unlawful since it means invading someone else's property. In case of graves, the question is: Is both constructing a building as well as allowing those buildings to remain unlawful? Or is only construction unlawful, and the building can stay and destroying it is not compulsory?

If you say it is only construction of the building that is unlawful and the building can stay once built, we say when the building can stay, and the destruction of it is also not allowed *then who gave them the permission to destroy the shrines of the Pure Imams (a) in Baqi' and persist in it?* If they say both building over graves and the remaining of it is unlawful, as written by Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyem thus: *'It is compulsory to destroy the shrines and the buildings over graves and their remaining is also not allowed.'* We say: *If the remaining of the building is unlawful, why did the companions of the Prophet (s) keep his house and not destroy it? Is it possible to say that by keeping the house, the companions committed an unlawful act?*

If the Prophet (s) prohibited building over graves and his prohibition implies unlawfulness, and he did not make his own grave an exception, the first building that must be destroyed is his grave since most certainly he will not be happy with the remaining of the building which is unlawful.

We accept that the companions of the Prophet (s) did not make a building over his grave, but why did they commit an unlawful act by keeping the building over the grave of the Prophet (s)? We must say that the remaining of the buildings over graves is not unlawful

especially when the act of the companions is regarded as a proof by the Sunnis.

They may say: the building that is made over the grave is different to the building that was there from before. Allowing the building made over the grave to remain is unlawful, but, allowing the building to remain, that was there before, is not. Who, in their right mind, would consider a difference between these two, and so they do not have an intellectual answer for letting the building remain over the grave of the Prophet (s).

The history of the Prophet's (s) shrine

As confessed by the historians and researchers and all Muslims the present building over the grave of the Prophet (s) is not the same one that existed from the beginning and according to historical evidence **this building was destroyed and rebuilt many times,** and their dates have been recorded in books.

The **person** who made the **first building over the grave of the Prophet (s) was Omar ibn Khattab** and he made a wall around the grave of the Prophet (s). The reason for making this wall was apparently because people used to pick the soil of the grave to such an extent that it would have caused the grave to become bare and open and this wall was meant to stop this.

In any case, the wall that Omar made was the first building. It is even quoted that this wall had a hole and people used to put their hands through this hole and pick from the soil of the grave and for this reason, they later blocked this hole. Surely they never used to say picking from the soil of the grave is unlawful but used to prevent this act so the soil of the grave didn't run out and cause the grave to become open.

Ayesha used to live in that place even after the Prophet (s), and after the burial of Omar next to Abu Bakar. For some reason, he put a wall between the graves and separated the part she used to live in, and this was the second building around the grave.

Later, **Abdullah ibn Zubair and Omar ibn abd Al Aziz** repaired the walls that had worn out and rebuilt them.

During the time of **Walid ibn Abd Al Malik**, they **destroyed** and **rebuilt** the whole house again.

It is said in history that the door of the mosque and house of the Prophet (s) caught fire again since it was made mainly of wood and straw, and for this reason it was rebuilt.

In the years **654,765,881, 886,891 A.H** both the **grave** and the **house** and the **buildings around** it **were repaired.** Surely it is only natural for the house to gradually wear out for the builders to think of refurbishing and expanding the place.

Later, **several domes where made for this place** and it finally turned into what it is today.

The last building and development of the mosque of the Prophet (s) before the recent development was in the year 1270 A.H by King Abdulhamid Uthmani.

In any case, every time the buildings and graves would get destroyed or worn out, they would be repaired and rebuilt into much better and more magnificent buildings, and these would all take place **in the presence of the scholars** and Muslims, who came every year to visit the grave of the Prophet (s), and never denied any help towards this matter and **did not regard this act to be immoral.** The majority of reformation took place in the time of the four Imams of the Sunnis and they showed no objection towards it. If constructing buildings was unlawful they why did they repair and reconstruct the building over the grave of the Prophet (s) constantly and even make new buildings when the last one had worn out? Did all the builders, givers of help (money and other forms), and the witnesses of these repairs commit an unlawful act?

They might say that constructing buildings is unlawful in the first place but if they repair it once it has been built or rebuild it, there is no problem. But when we say there used to be a building over the graves of the four Pure Imams (a) in *Baqi'* as well as a tomb and a shrine, there shouldn't be any problems with the repair and rebuilding of those graves, they do not accept it nor allow the previous buildings to be rebuilt.

Obviously, the Muslims at the beginning of Islam and the companions and their followers never used these narrations to prove unlawfulness, and not only did they not object to the repair and regeneration of the buildings in various centuries, they even praised the builders and repairers.

The baseless claim of Bulhayed

Bulhayed, the cheif judge of Najd has claimed that the construction over the graves took place in the time of the generation after the companions, which was after the fifth century, and before that, there were no buildings over graves. He has tried to clear the companions and the generation after them from this "unlawful act" by saying this and make buildings over graves look like an innovation that appeared after the fifth century.

This saying is nothing but a baseless claim and can easily be nullified with a slight investigation of history. Here is some evidence from history that lucidly shows the existence of these buildings and the construction of such buildings even in the first century:

1– The pure body of the Prophet (s) was from the very beginning buried in the house of Ayeshah. The next two caliphs were also buried next to his grave and this building was renovated several times during the first century.

2– As we said before, 'Abbas and the Pure Imams (a)from the household of the Prophet (s) were buried in *Dar Al Aqil* which was a house with a roof that bodies used to get buried in.

3– There were other houses similar to *Dar al Aqil* which were used as burial places. Samhudi has precisely emphasised that (the summary of which in *Kashf Al Irtiab* is as follows):

"The grave of Sad ibn Madh was in *Dar Ibn Aflah* and his grave had a tomb over it in the time of Abdul Aziz ibn Mohammad who lived in the second century."

In contuation of the statement, Samhudi sees the likelihood of this grave belonging to Fatimah bint Asad, and it was a grave that was in *Dar Al Aflah.*

4– In another place, Samhudi says:

"Sa'id ibn Mohammad ibn Jobair has been quoted by Ibn Zabalah to have said that he saw the grave of Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet (s) in *Zowra* which was a house that belonged to Mohammad ibn Zeid ibn Ali."

5– In another place he says:

"Zeid ibn Sa'id has been quoted by Ibn Shoba to have quoted his grandfather who said: When Aqil ibn Abi Talib was digging a shaft in his house he came across an engraved stone on which was written: 'This is the grave of Omme Habibah, the daughter of Sakhr ibn Harb.' Aqil then covered the shaft and made a room over it. Ibn Sa'id says: "I entered that room and saw the grave myself."

6– It has been mentioned in the book *Omdatu Talib* as well as in other books. that Haroon Al Rashid made a tomb and a shrine for Imam Ali (a) in the second century because the grave of Ali (a) was concealed until the time of Imam Sadiq (a) and it was uncovered during his time. Therefore, they made a tomb and a shrine over his grave, and the famous poet *Hussain ibn Hajaj* recited the following about it:

Oh you, the owner of the white tomb in Najaf

Whoever visits your grave and seeks cure,

Will definetly get cured

This proves that they used to make tombs and shrines over graves in the second century.

7– In the book on the history of Baghdad, Khatib Baghdadi says:

"Imam Kazim (a) was buried in the *Shoniziah* graveyard outside the tomb, and his grave is famous as a place to visit and there is a massive building over it and there are numerous and expensive lamps, carpets and tools inside it."

It is clear from this statement that firstly, there were graves that had tombs over them, and the Imam (a) was buried outside one of them. Imam Musa Kazim (a) was martyred in the year 183 A.H which is the second century. This is further proof there were tombs and buildings over graves in the second century, and the grave of Imam Musa

Kazim (a) was respected and held high at that time as a place to visit for Muslims.

Therefore, the claim of Judge Bolhayed is unrealistic and impractical since Khatib Baghdadi, who was born in 392 A.H., and wrote his book when he was thirty or forty, in which he said the grave of Imam Kazim (a) had a massive shrine. His sentences show that the building existed from before and was not suddenly constructed, that it started as a small building and later turned into a massive and immaculate place.

8– All the historians say that Imam Zein Al Abedin (a), Imam Baqir (a) and Imam Sadiq (a) were buried in the tomb of Imam Hasan (a) and 'Abbas, and their martyrdom took plave in the first and second century. The martyrdom of Imam Zein Al Abedin (a) was in the year 95 A.H, and Imam Baqir's (a) in the year 114, and Imam Sadiq (a) in the year 148 A.H, and none of them reached the third century. The tomb and shrine of Imam Hasan (a) and the Pure Imams (a) in *Baqi'* was very magnificent, and had porches and aprons, yet there was no word on unlawfulness of having this until the time of Ibn Taymiyyah.

9– It is said that Imam Raza (a) was buried in the Tomb of Haroon. History says:

"Truly, Imam Raza (a) was buried in the tomb that Haroon was buried in which was in Tous in the house of Hamid ibn Qohtabah Tayye."

Apparently Mamun had built the Haroniah Tomb over the grave of his father and he used to live in the era of knowledge, when scholars and philosophers were held in high esteem. At that time, there were scientific connections between the Muslims and other nations, such as the Greeks, and the scholars did not hide their views.

According to what history has quoted, Mamum formed a council in which different scholars discussed Tauhid and other belief issues with Imam Raza (a) which continued for a number of days. Mamun wasn't a common person himself. He had quiet a lot of scientific information and was a clever man.

Shafe'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal are two Sunni Imams who used to live in the time of Mamum. Sofyan ibn Ayna was also one of the many

scholars living during that period. If making a tomb over Haroon's grave was unlawful, these scholars would not have remained silent and would have expressed their objection even in a quiet voice, just as they expressed their views openly on other issues such pre- eternity of the Quran. For example Ahmad ibn Hanbal did not believe in it. He expressed his views openly and was even sent to prison for insisting on his denial of pre-eternity of the Quran. If building or the existence of a building over graves was an immoral act, the Sunni Imams would have definetly said something about it. Imam Raza (a), who was forcibly given the title of crown prince, would have expressed something about this, whereas, there is nothing that implies unlawfulness of this from him. He wrote a treatise for Mamun in which he mentioned quite a lot of the issues on belief and rulings, but did not mention the unlawfulness of buildings over graves.

Some may say: He was not in a position to object to the acts of Mamum. This saying is not correct since the Imam (a) used to advise Mamum and even object. An example of such comments is when the slave was pouring water over the hands of Mamun and he was making *Wudu*. The Imam (a) told him: "Don't do this. Don't make anyone a partner in your worship." Thus, he did object in the places needed.

In any case, Imam Raza (a) was the major scholar of his time and this is not deniable. As a scholar during his time, his courage was unmatched, so he would have definitely objected to making the tomb over Haroon's grave. Not only did he not object, but he made a will to be buried in the same tomb.

10– In the year 236 A.H, Motawakil ordered the destruction of Imam Husayn's (a) grave and the rooms next to it. He ordered ploughing of that land and turning it into a farm. The Muslims resented his act and wrote slogans and abuses against him on the walls of mosques. The poets also attacked him in their poems. One such poem is as follows:

By Allah, the sons of Omayyah killed the son / Of the daughter of their oppressed Prophet

Their cousins did something similar and destroyed his grave. / They feel sorry why they were not at that time

To participate in his (Husayn (a)) killing and thus, / Follow them by destroying and disrespecting his grave

This is how Masoudi describes this event:

"In the year 236 A.H, famously known as Zebraj, Mutawakil ordered people to move towards the grave of Husayn (a) and destroy the grave and the land and infuritate whoever is present there. He then set some prizes for whoever volunteered for this job. But every one became fearful of the divine punishment and avoided such an act. However a person names Zebraj picked a shovel and destroyed the upper parts of the grave. During this time some workers also started destroying other parts of the building and the status of the grave remained this way until the time of Mustansir."

From the above statements it is clear that the grave of Imam Husayn (a) had a building and a tomb in the third century; destroying the grave of Imam Husayn (a) was an immoral act in the eyes of Muslims and thus they were fearful of such an act and recited poems in which they attacked Motawakil and wrote slogans against him on the walls. If buildings over graves were unlawful, they would have praised Mutawakil for destroying the graves. But as we can see, even though he set some prizes, no body volunteered and every one was fearful of its punishment.

It is clear form the quoted evidences that building over graves was a common affair and this was the Muslim practical way of life. The maximum ruling on this issue seen in books is undesirability of having buildings over normal graves and this does not exist in case of the grave of the Prophets (a) and saints, rather it is a necessary for their respect and other reasons mentioned previously.Therefore, raising the issue of **unlawfulness of buildings over graves** is a baseless claim and **an innovation set by Ibn Taymiyyah** and **Ibn Qayem** and later on **by Mohammad ibn Abd Al Wahhab**.

Building mosques over graves

The other issue raised by **Wahhabis** is building mosques next to graves, including the graves of the Prophets (a) and the saints. They very much **persist on not making mosques next** to the **grave of the Prophet (s)** and the **saints**. The summary of what he has said in the book *Zad Al Mad* is as follows:

"The Prophet (s) burned the Dhirar Mosque and ordered its destruction. The paganish shrines are the same and their destruction is compulsory and pause is not correct unless in those acts are good and cause nearness to Allah. Thus the mosque built over a grave must be destroyed similar to a dead body buried in a mosque which must be exhumed out of its grave and taken out of the mosque. Therefore, in Islam the grave and mosque do not go together and whichever one built later is destroyed and the one built first remains."

On this basis **they destroyed the mosque** that was built next to the **grave of Hamza** (the master of the martyrs) in Ohud.

There are two forms to this issue: one: when the grave is placed inside the mosque, similar to the grave of the Prophet (s) which is inside Masjid Al Nabbi. The grave of Muawiyah ibn Yazid is also inside a mosque. In the Ommawi mosque, there is a shrine that is famously known as the grave of Prophet Yahya (a).

The second form is when a mosque is made next to a grave in such a way that the grave is located outside the mosque similar to the mosques that are made next to the grave of Imam Ali (a) or the grave of Imam Husayn (a) and Imam Raza (a). The Wahhabis consider both forms to be unlawful.

To prove this view, the Wahhabis have adhered to narrations which we shall analayse here.

One of the quotations used as proof, is what Bukhari has said in *The chapter on the undesirability of building mosques over graves.* Apparently, Bukhari does not consider the matter unlawful and only regards it as undesirable. Here is the quotation of Bukhari:

"When Hasan ibn Hasan ibn Ali passed away, his wife made a tomb over his grave for a year and removed it later. They then heard a voice that said: 'Did they find what they had lost?' Another voice replied: 'No, they did not.' They became hopeless and returned."

This is what the Wahhabis used as proof for the unlawfulness of making a mosque over a grave. Numerous criticisms will cross any wise mind and below we shall point to some of the main ones:

First: It is clear that the wife of Hasan ibn Hasan had made the tomb for protection from rain and sunlight so that she could pray or read the Quran over the grave in peace, since she used to visit that grave frequently.

Second: Whose voice was it? Was it the voice of one of the Infallibles (a)? Was it one of the companions? Was it someone unknown? The above quote has not specified the owner of the voice; so, is it possible to regard it as proof? Is the saying of any voice regarded as proof?

Third: What was the content of the statement? Did the statement consider this act as immoral? Did it denounce the tomb built over the grave? What this quote means is that those who came to the graves could not find their dead ones and returned hopeless. There is nothing about a tomb in this statement and it could have been said even in the absence of a tomb. Therefore, there is no mention of the tomb and mosque next to a grave.

Fourth: Instead of condoling and feeling sorry for the respectable woman who cried next to the grave of her dead one for nearly a year and read the Quran over it, the caller is saying such unsuitable words and scolding the woman. If the caller was a creditable person, this would not have been his manner. Besides, who visits a grave with the intention of reviving the dead? No one visits any grave with this intention and most certainly that woman did not have such expectations. However, the caller has accused, criticised and scolded her for something that she did not even dream of. Therefore, there is no indication of the claim in this narration and is not at all related to making a mosque or tomb over graves.

There are other narrations quoted in *Bukhari* and *Muslim Sahih* which are divided into three groups based on their content:

The first group

The first group curses the Jews and Christians because they used to make the graves of their Prophets (a) in the mosques. One such narration is the one Ayesha has quoted from the Prophet (s). She has added a sentence at the end of this narration. This is the narration:

"Ayesha is quoted to have said: 'While suffering from the illness that led to his demise, the Prophet (s) said: 'May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians for they have made the mosque the grave of the Prophets (a).' Ayesha says: 'If it wasn't for this issue they would have left the surrounding of the grave of the Prophet (s) open, but there was the fear of turning his burial place into a prostration place.'

We will certainly discuss the meaning of placing the grave as a mosque later. This narration has also been quoted by Abu Hurairah and has used the term "May Allah kill them," instead of "May Allah curse them."

In the *Ziaratul Qubur* treatise, after quoting these narrations from *Moata Malik*, *Sahih Muslim* and *Sunan Abi Da'ud*, Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"This is the reason our scholars said: 'Building over graves is not permissible." He then says: "Truly there are no narrations about the mosques and the shrines in the narrations that have come to us and there is only the prohibition of making the graves a mosque and the person who does this has been cursed."

The late Syed Mohsen Amin has analysed the evidence for the majority of these narration in *Kash Al Irtiab* and has found them to be faulty. However, we shall ignore the discussion on evidence and only argue the implication of the narrations:

The first question is, what is meant by; "The Jews and the Christians used to make the grave of their Prophets their mosques?" What is definite is that this sentence is talking about the practical way adopted by the followers of these two religions towards the graves of their Prophets. Does this sentence mean they used to make a mosque over or next to the grave of the Prophets? Does it mean they used to prostrate over them? Did they make the grave their Qiblah direction instead of facing the main Qiblah direction? Did they make the grave

of the Prophets their prostration places and prostrate in front of them as the idol worshippers used to prostrate before the idols?

To clarify this matter we must first undertand the linguistic meaning of the word *mosque*. *Mosque* means the place for prostration. This is what Aqrab Al Mawarid says:

"*Masjid* and *Masjad* mean the place where prostration takes place, and wherever worship is performed is a *Masjad*."

Therefore the primary meaning of mosque is the area and the place where prostration takes place and has been specified for prayers, supplications and other forms of worship such as prostration, which is one of the major symbols of worship.

What the narration is speaking of is a prostration that is related to the Prophets (a), and it is not talking about those who made mosques over the graves of their Prophets. It is talking about making the grave the place of prostration. Three probabilities are raised:

1– Prostration upon a grave.

2– Prostration towards a grave.

3– Prostration for a grave.

It is clear that the third probability applied to the Jews and Christian and this was the reason they were cursed.

In this sentence the Jews and the Christians have been cursed because they used to make the graves of their Prophets mosques. Thus we must analyse this.

Making the graves prostration places sometimes occurs when a person prays to Allah (swt) on the earth unaware that he is prostrating on a grave. It is also possible that it is covered by a carpet over which he is prostrating. Maybe it was prayer time when he was in the grave yard and he started praying. All his acts of worship are, of course, for Allah (swt) and he has nothing to do with the grave and doesn't even know who the grave belongs to. He does not have anything to do with the grave or the person buried inside it and is prostrating over the stones and soils only for the sake of Allah (swt). Will this curse in the narration include him as well? Would any just person utter such

words (about the person)? Is it possible to create a general principle from those narrations that will include such cases as well?

Sometime a person is praying and, by chance, there is grave right in front of him. But he is not paying any attention to the grave and his prayer intentions are towards Ka'bah. His prayer is for Allah (swt) and there are no traces of polytheism in it. Most certainly those narration do not include such worship and prostrations, whereas, the Wahhabis are using these narration as a general principle and saying one must absolutely not pray next to the graves and in the graveyards.

We say the act of the Jews and Christians must have definitely been mixed with polytheism and thus cursed by the Messenger of Allah (s) (only in this narration). Either they used to prostrate over graves similar to how they would prostrate for idols or had placed the graves as their *Qiblah* instead of *Bayt al Maqdis* or any other *Qiblah* direction they may have had. In any case they used to commit a polytheistic act.

Even in the time of Prophet Musa (a), *Bani Israel* had inclinations towards polytheism since they were under the yoke of Pharoah for many years, and generation after generation had become used to worshipping, idols, men, and Pharoah. For this reason, when Prophet Musa (a) helped them cross the sea and rescued them from Pharoah, on their way towards their land (the present Palestine) they came across an idol worshipping tribe and became inclined towards them and asked Prophet Musa (a) to make them idols to worship.

﴿وَجَٰوَزۡنَا بِبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱلۡبَحۡرَ فَأَتَوۡاْ عَلَىٰ قَوۡمٖ يَعۡكُفُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَصۡنَامٖ لَّهُمۡۚ قَالُواْ يَٰمُوسَى ٱجۡعَل لَّنَآ إِلَٰهٗا كَمَا لَهُمۡ ءَالِهَةٞۚ قَالَ إِنَّكُمۡ قَوۡمٞ تَجۡهَلُونَ﴾

"We carried the Children of Israel across the sea, whereat they came upon a people cleaving to certain idols that they had. They said," O Moses, make for us a god like the gods that they have." He said," You are indeed an ignorant lot."[1]

1. *Surah al-A'raf*, Chapter 7, verse 138.

Also, when Prophet Musa (a) went to Mount *Toor*, Sameri exploited this tendency in the *Bani Israel* and made a calf out of gold and most of them again turned towards idol worship. It is clear from these evidences that polytheism was still present in their nature and for this reason they got caught in polytheism more than ever in the time after Prophet Musa (a).

﴿وَقَالَتِ ٱلۡيَهُودُ عُزَيۡرٌ ٱبۡنُ ٱللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ ٱلنَّصَٰرَى ٱلۡمَسِيحُ ٱبۡنُ ٱللَّهِۖ ذَٰلِكَ قَوۡلُهُم بِأَفۡوَٰهِهِمۡۖ يُضَٰهِـُٔونَ قَوۡلَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِن قَبۡلُۚ قَٰتَلَهُمُ ٱللَّهُۚ أَنَّىٰ يُؤۡفَكُونَ﴾

"The Jews say," Ezra is the son of Allah," and the Christians say," Christ is the son of Allah." That is an opinion that they mouth, imitating the opinions of the faithless of former times. May Allah assail them, where do they stray?"[1]

Instead of Allah (swt), they regarded their scholars and religious ministers as their Lords and Guardians:

﴿ٱتَّخَذُوٓاْ أَحۡبَارَهُمۡ وَرُهۡبَٰنَهُمۡ أَرۡبَابٗا مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡمَسِيحَ ٱبۡنَ مَرۡيَمَ وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓاْ إِلَّا لِيَعۡبُدُوٓاْ إِلَٰهٗا وَٰحِدٗاۖ لَّآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَۚ سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ عَمَّا يُشۡرِكُونَ﴾

"They have taken their scribes and their monks as lords besides Allah, and also Christ, Mary's son; though they were commanded to worship only the One God, there is no god except Him; He is far too immaculate to have any partners that they ascribe [to Him]!."[2]

Polytheism reached the level in Christianty where they believed in the son, the father and the Holy Spirit. To give the final ultimatum to the Christains, the holy Quran directs Prophet Isa (a) so that they hear it from him that he is not God and says:

1. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 30.
2. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 31.

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَـٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ ٱتَّخِذُونِى وَأُمِّىَ إِلَـٰهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ سُبْحَـٰنَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِىٓ أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِى بِحَقٍّ ۚ إِن كُنتُ قُلْتُهُۥ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُۥ ۚ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِى نَفْسِى وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ مَا فِى نَفْسِكَ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلَّـٰمُ ٱلْغُيُوبِ﴾

"And when Allah will say, 'O Isa, son of Maryam, did you say to mankind: 'Take me and my mothetr for two gods besides Allah?' He will say, 'Glory be to Thee, it was not mine to utter that which I had no right to. If I said it then You would have known it.You know what is in my mind, and I know not what is with You.You, only You, are the Knower of things hidden.' "[1]

It is clear from this verse that the Christians had also inclined towards polytheism in the time of Prophet Isa (a).

Now it is possible to understand the cursing of those who place the graves of their Prophets (a) as their prostration places, because man made the grave of the Prophet (a) a prostration place in such a way that it included polytheism. He had intentions towards it while praying and prostrating for it. However, if someone has made a mosque next to a grave and pays no attention to the grave while praying and only prayes and prostrates to Allah (swt), he is not worshipping it.The intention of no Muslim, either Shia or Sunni, is to prostrate to the grave or worship its owner. This is exactly the case when Muslims prayer in Masjid al-Nabi next to the grave of the Prophet (s).

We ask: How do Wahhabis pray in Madina? Do they regard the prayer there as null? Are they praying in that magnificent mosque for Allah or are they prostrating to the Messenger of Allah (s)?

Clearly everyone is praying to Allah (swt). This is the same in the Shia holy shrines and the mosques built nest to the graves of the Pure Imams (a) in which Muslims pray. They are establishing prayer

1. *Surah al-Ma'edah*, Chapter 5, verse 116.

purely for Allah (swt) and are not at all prostrating to the grave-owner or placing him as their *Qiblah* direction.

Surely, and without doubt, prayer and prostration with such an intention even towards the grave of the Prophet (s) or the pure Imams (a) or placing them as god or idol is polytheism. However, the question is: Which Muslim has placed the grave of the Prophet (s) or the Pure Imams (a) as his idol to worship?

Prostrating to Allah next to a grave, or even infront of a grave or, to say the most, over the grave, only for Allah (swt), simply intending to prostrate over earth, not because it is a grave, is in no way polytheism or paganism.

Therefore, these narrations do not say don't make mosques over graves or next to graves, nor are they saying building mosques over graves is unlawful; rather, they are saying do not make the graves mosques and do not prostrate to the grave and its owner as you will get caught in polytheism. Do not do what the Jews and Christian did. In other words polytheistic prostrations that look like idolatory and grave-worship have been scolded in these narrations.

There is evidence in narrations that confirm the truth of what we have said and we shall mention two examples:

1– Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* and Malik in *Al- Mowatta* have quoted this narration from the Messenger of Allah (s):

"O Allah! Do not place my grave as an idol and may Allah (swt) curse those who place the graves of their Prophets as mosques."

This sentence shows that in the time of the Prophet (s) the Christian and Jews used to place the graves of their Prophets (a) as idols and worship them.

2– This sentence by Ayesha was added to some of these narrations:

"If there was no fear of worshipping the grave, they would have left my grave open. But the fear that they place my grave as a prostration place does exist."

As we said Ayesha says: if there was no fear of the grave being placed as a mosque, they would not have built walls around it but left

the grave open. However, because of the fear of turning into a mosque, they built the walls.

The question now raised is: What was the benefit and advantage of this wall that satisfied Omar?

This wall prevented two things; it stopped prostration over the grave of the Prophet (s) and nobody was able to get close to the grave and bow or prostrate towards it as towards an idol. It blocked seeing the grave. However, it did not stop praying around the grave. There was also no need to stop it. Since there was no problem with praying around the grave no body objected to it. There were people who stood next to the grave in such a way that they faced the wall and the grave in side it but since they prayed to Allah (swt) no body felt the need to prevent them from this act. *Today also, people pray next to the grave in Masjid Al Nabbi and no body is stopping them*. Stopping them is also not wise, since they are all only praying to Allah (swt). Therefore, it is clear that the wall was made for what was remprimanded and that was turning the grave into an idol and prostrating to worship it.The prayer of the Prophet (s) was to protect such an act.

However, if montheism reaches a level that the fear of worshipping the grave as an idol does not exist, the wall can be removed and they can be allowed to pray to Allah (swt) without the wall. This is because the first sentence of Ayesha was, "if this fear did not exist, they would have removed the wall". This fear did exist at that time because Muslims had just left worshipping idols.

Evidences of Sunni traditionalists

Here it is necessary to point to the evidence offered by Sunnis in their books. They say: "There is no problem in building a mosque next to a grave or praying there without the intention of worshipping (the grave)."

Some evidence has been quoted by the late Syed Mohsin Amin:

1– In *Irshad Al Sari fi Sharh Sahih Bukhari*, Qastani has quoted Bedhawi to have said:

"Since the Jews and Christians prostrated before the graves of the Prophets in reverence, and turned them into their *Qiblah* and faced them when praying and worshipped them as idols, the Muslims were prevented from this act. But if someone makes a mosque next to the grave of a pious person and his intention of praying next to the grave is only for the blessings of Allah (swt), and not reverence, nor turning the grave into their Qiblah, this act will not be punished and is not prohibited."

2– In the footnote on *Sunan Nisaee*, Samhudi says:

"They made the graves of their Prophets mosque they made them their *Qiblah* and prayed towards them."

In another place he says:

"The intention of the Prophet (s) in that sentence is to forbid his nation from the attitude of the Jews and Christians towards the graves of their Prophets (a), since they made the graves mosques, in such a way that, either they prostrated towards them to show respect, or turned them into their *Qiblah* and prayed towards them."

3– In the commentary of *Sahih Muslim*, Nawawi says:

"The scholars have said: the Prophet (s) forbid making his grave and other graves mosques, as he was fearful of excessive reverence corrupting them into such acts of polytheism, comparable to the fate of many nations before. And when the abundance of visitors forced the companions and the generations after them to expand the mosque… they made a circular wall over the grave of the Prophet (s) so that it was not possible to see the grave inside the mosque and the commom people prayed in the other right direction…

It is obvious that the prohibition stands when there is the likelihood of polytheism and paganism and this is what the curse of the Prophet (s) is related to.

Another commentator says:

"The Ayesha narration is related to the time before the development of the Prophet's (s) mosque, but after its development and placing Ayesha's room inside it, they rebuilt that room into a triangular format so no one could pray over the grave."

4– "The Jews and Christians worshipped their Prophets next to their graves making them partners in their worship of Allah."

5– Qurtabi says:

"The pure Imams (a) have quoted Abi Marthad Ghanawi to have said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (s) say: "Do not pray or sit towards the grave." This forbids making the graves the *Qiblah* and praying over or towards them, akin to what the Jews and Christian did as it would lead to worshipping the owner of the grave as an idol."

This definition has been ascribed to the Prophet (s) and Qurtabi is quoting it from the Pure Imams (a).

The second group

The second group of narrations used by the Wahhabis as the proof for claiming the unlawfulness of building mosques around the graves speak against the pictures of worthy people and paying attention to them in worship. These have been mentioned in some of the narration books including *Sahih Muslim* which quote Ayesha to have said:

"Om Habibah and Om Salmah were speaking in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (s) about a Synagogue they had seen in Ethiopia in which there were pictures.The Messenger of Allah (s) said: "Whenever a pious man passed away, they would make a mosque over his grave and place such pictures inside it. On the Day of Judgment they will be the worst people in the presence of Allah (swt)."

It was not building mosques that was denounced but placing pictures in a mosque that led to its worship. If this is the intention of someone making a mosque his endownment is not correct and a mosque will not be built with such acts since it is *Haram*. But the important point here is that none of the Muslims have such intentions, therefore, the scolding and prohibition does not include them.

In *Irshad Al Sarri*, Qastani says:

"The generations before them used to make these faces to get used to them and remember their good acts and work hard in the way of Allah (swt) as they did, and worship Allah (swt) next to their graves. But the generations after them were not aware of their intentions, and

with the temptations of the Shaytan, they got caught in worshipping them. For this reason, the Prophet (s) forbade Muslims from such an act."

Today, it is also a custom even among the monotheists to hang the pictures of scholars, pious people, the martyrs and the loved ones in their homes or public places. These pictures are there to remind them of their faces and pious deeds. For example when one looks at the picture of Imam Khomeni (May he reside in Allah's paradise), he remembers the events and sacrifices; the genius, glory and bravery of Imam Khomeni during the revolution. Thus the essence of this act was not forbidden. But the later generations did not pay any attention and thought that their ancestors used to worship these pictures and as a result got caught in polytheism and idolatry and this is the corruption that the Prophet (s) has warned about and prohibited.

The third group

The third group of narrations concern female visitors of graves and those who turn the graves into prostration places and put lights over them that have been scolded. Nesaee quotes Ibn 'Abbas to have quoted the Prophet (s) say:

"Qatibah informed us that Abd Al Warith ibn Saed quoted a tradition from Mohammad ibn Jihada who quoted from Abi Saleh who quoted Ibn 'Abbas to have said: " The Messenger of Allah (s) cursed those women visitors of graves who established mosques over graves and set lights over them."

The late Syed Mohsin Amin using Sunni traditionalist books proves that the evidence for it is faulty. In the evidence of this narration, the names of some people are observed who are known as liars and forgerers among the traditionalists and most likely the Abi Saleh mentioned in the evidence is the same Abi Saleh the liar. Abd Al Warith ibn Sa'id has also been reprimanded in the books. However, we are not going to dicuss the evidential aspect here and only going to analyse the implication of the tradition.

Analysing the implication of the narration

1– The text of this tradition is shaky since according to the quotation of Ibn Majeh this narration does not have any additions and only the women visitors of graves have been cursed and it said: "May Allah curse the women visitors of graves."

2– As you already know, similar to Quranic verses, narrations can be interpreted and explained by one another and thus, if we place this group of narrations next to the second group of narration it will become clear that the cursing was for those women visitors of graves who established mosques over graves and have been remembered as pagans and worshippers of pictures in those narrations.

3– There are two sentences in these narrations that have been perceived as undesirability:

The reason for giving the ruling on undesirability is the narration they quote from the Prophet (s) in which he teaches the way of visiting graves to Ayesha. However the undesirability of women visiting graves may be for the reason that they sometimes scream and cry loudly in the public view of strangers and sometimes say unsuitable words when mourning.

Second: The rebuke of placing lights on graves. Tirmidhi has quoted a narration from Ibn 'Abbas in this regard with the following content:

"The Prophet (s) visited a grave at night and they turned on a light for him."

But if there are no benefits in having a light, it would only be wasting wealth just as Samhudi says in the commentary of *Sunan Nesaee*:

"The prohibition of light is because it is wasting wealth for no reason."

Does cursing always indicate unlawfulness?

Here someone may say that the word *curse* is compatible with *unlawfulness* and not with *undesirability* thus cursing in these narrations must be perceived for unlawfulness.

The answer to this query is that curse means "distancing and banishing". Whoever does something undesirabile becomes distanced

from the divine rewards and benefits, and when he commits unlawful acts he will become even more distanced and prepare his own punishment. Therefore, *curse* is not exclusive to *unlawfulness* and has been used for stating *undesirability* in many narrations such as the following one:

"May Allah curse the passenger who travels alone, and whoever eats his food alone, and he who sleeps alone at home."

Surely the reason for this undesirability is also clear since whoever sleeps alone at home may sometime fall ill or get stung by an insect or animal, etc., and there is no one to help, or when in a desert there are chances of coming across carnivors, thieves, etc. But in any case no one can say that these three acts are unlawful and *curse* in this narration confirms unlawfulness of the three acts mentioned.

Other evidences are the sentences about *Muhalil* (one who makes a remarriage lawful):

"May Allah curse the *Muhalil*, and the one for whom making licit takes place."

If this sentence means unlawfulness of the *Tahlil* (making licit) then this act must not be performed, whereas, the ruling for *Tahlil* and its specification have been stated in the *Shariah* law, and it is clear from this sentence that even though remarriage is possible, too many divorces must not take place. In order to admonish repeated divorce that results in calling a *Muhalil*, they have cursed the issue of *Tahlil* or have considered divorce as the most chided lawful.

In this case the term *curse* is not exclusive to *unlawfulness* and has been used for *undesirability* in many cases.

In another narration we read that when a pious person from the Jews and Christians died they used to build a mosque over his grave and place his statue or photo over there and worship it and these are the worse of all people. On this basis, it is possible to say that the *Al* in *Al Mutakhedhin* is pointing to them specifically, and is not general.

The reasons on permissibility of building mosques over graves

1– This is what is said in the story of the people of Kahf, where the issue of fighting polytheism and paganism is raised. When people

realised that such a group exists, they went to the cave but the entrance to it was sealed. A discussion took place about the number of the people of Kahf, and what duties they had towards them, since, a phenomenon had taken place and all the groups were persuaded to somehow keep its memory alive.

About this case the holy Quran says:

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَعۡثَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ لِيَعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ وَعۡدَ ٱللَّهِ حَقّٞ وَأَنَّ ٱلسَّاعَةَ لَا رَيۡبَ فِيهَآ إِذۡ يَتَنَٰزَعُونَ بَيۡنَهُمۡ أَمۡرَهُمۡۖ فَقَالُواْ ٱبۡنُواْ عَلَيۡهِم بُنۡيَٰنٗاۖ رَّبُّهُمۡ أَعۡلَمُ بِهِمۡۚ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ غَلَبُواْ عَلَىٰٓ أَمۡرِهِمۡ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيۡهِم مَّسۡجِدٗا﴾

"So it was that We let them come upon them, that they might know that Allah's promise is true, and that there is no doubt in the Hour. As they were disputing among themselves about their matter, they said," Build a building over them. Their Lord knows them best." Those who had the say in their matter said," We will set up a place of worship over them.""[1]

One group insisted on making a memorial and another on building a mosque; the second group won. After three hundred years, the tyrant and pagan kings were destroyed and people had become monothesits. Thus, this group decided to make a mosque over the cave in which the people of Kahf were sleeping.

The Quranic definitions also show that those who took the decision were the faithful. Their speech showed that they were monothesits and thus decided to make a mosque. Quoting this story, the holy Quran instead of criticising this decision shows approval of this act. However, it is possible to say that the holy Quran has not visibly praised this act and thus the verse does not indicate approval.

The holy Quran is not just a story book or a book that plainly tells of events but it is the book of guidance. In all the Quranic stories, the main goal is guiding people, and familiazing people with the true morals, thus,a historical event will show the correct path. The goal of

1. *Surah al-Kahf,* Chapter 18, verse 21.

mentioning the above story has been stated as fighting polytheism and paganism and it is praising chivalrous men who believed in their Lord, and it thus says:

﴿نَّحۡنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيۡكَ نَبَأَهُم بِٱلۡحَقِّۚ إِنَّهُمۡ فِتۡيَةٌ ءَامَنُواْ بِرَبِّهِمۡ وَزِدۡنَٰهُمۡ هُدٗى﴾

"We relate to you their account in truth. They were indeed youths who had faith in their Lord, and We had enhanced them in guidance."[1]

If building a mosque over the place of such monothesits, who were the role models for fighting tyranny and oppression, is an immoral act, it would have been thus mentioned in the holy Quran or, at least, said that it was a vain and futile act. But not only it does not criticise this act, it speaks as if it is praising this act and that there is no problem in building mosques over the graves of pious people.

The following is what the Late Amin has quoted from *Kashaf*:

"In *Kashaf* it says that the verse that says: 'and those who became triumphant,' it means the faithful and their chief had the power to make a building for the people of Kahf and said, 'We shall build a mosque over the entrance of the cave so that people can pray inside it and seek blessings."

The following has also mentioned this point:

﴿إِنَّ ٱلدِّينَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمُۗ وَمَا ٱخۡتَلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ ٱلۡعِلۡمُ بَغۡيَۢا بَيۡنَهُمۡۗ وَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَرِيعُ ٱلۡحِسَابِ﴾

"Indeed, with Allah, religion is Islam, and those who were given the Book did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves. And whoever defies Allah's signs [should know that] Allah is swift at reckoning."[2]

1. *Surah al-Kahf*, Chapter 18, verse 13.
2. *Surah Al 'Imran*, Chapter 3, verse 19.

The holy Quran also considers Ibrahim (a) a Muslim and says:

﴿مَا كَانَ إِبۡرَٰهِيمُ يَهُودِيّٗا وَلَا نَصۡرَانِيّٗا وَلَٰكِن كَانَ حَنِيفٗا مُّسۡلِمٗا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ﴾

"Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Rather he was a hanif, a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists."[1]

In the interpretation byKashaf, Jalalein, Tabari and most of the other interpretations for this case, Ibn 'Abbas also, have said the meaning of this verse is:

"The Muslims said: 'We shall build a mosque for them so people can pray inside it, as the people of Kahf had the same belief and religion as us.'"

Contrary to the above, Mohammad ibn Abd Al Wahhab says:

"This verse means the second group who became triumphant were pagans, since if they were believers, they would not have decided on making a mosque over the grave of the pious people, as the Prophet (s) has cursed the doer of such an act."

Instead of saying that the holy Quran has quoted this event and not criticised it, they say: 'as they had the intention of building mosques, and building mosques over the grave of pious people is polytheism, therefore they were pagans.

In addition to this, if the group planning to build a mosque was polytheist then the first group who thought of building a memorial was also polytheist; therefore, it must be the age of paganism, whereas, it is clear from the words of interpreters that the time had changed and people had accepted the true religion and were monotheists and the monotheists had power and were the decision makers, and thus, building a mosque was agreed upon.

The attitude of the Wahhabis of choosing an ideology first and then superimposing the Quran on it as desired, is an immoral and unacceptable act.

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1. *Surah Al 'Imran*, Chapter 3, verse 67.

2– The other evidence on the permit for building mosques next to graves is the massive building of Masjid Al Nabbi in Madina which was expanded during the time of Walid ibn Abd Al Malik and the sponsor of this act was Omar ibn Abd Al Aziz. This development included the house of Ayesha and the grave of the Prophet (s). Omar ibn Abd Al Aziz is also respected as a scholar among the general public. About him, Ibn Sad says in *Tabaqat*:

"Omar ibn Abd Al Aziz is trustworthy and reliable. He had a deep understanding and knowledge and integrity, and has narrated many traditions."

Asqalani says in *Tahdhib* about him:

"Maymun ibn Mihran says: 'Before Omar ibn Abd Al Aziz, the scholars and scientists were counted as students and learners.'"

Omar ibn Abd Al Aziz was an independent, thoughtful and brave man and this is apparent from the directive he issued in which he removed the cursing of Ali (a). The expansion of the mosque by Omar ibn Abd Al Aziz is a reason for saying it was not unlawful, otherwise it must be admitted that this religious scholar committed an unlawful act.

People and scholars are praying in this mosque but not one has said the curse of the Prophet (s) includes them. Ibn Qayyem claims that in Islam. "Mosques and graves cannot be combined." Contrary to his saying, the mosque of the Prophet (s) and his grave have been combined and are within sight of all Muslims today.

If Wahhabis believe that they must follow their pious predecessors and call themselves *Salafis,* then they must follow their example, since there is no difference between building a mosque over the grave of the Prophet (s) and other Prophets (a) and saints.

3– The other evidence is Masjid Al Haram. It is agreed among the historians and biographers that Isma'il (a) and his mother Hajar were buried in *Hijr Isma'il.*

Ibn Athir wrote:

"Isma'il (a) made a will to be buried next to the grave of his mother in the *Hijr*."

The characteristics of the burial place have been specified in history books and they have written that the grave of Isma'il (a) is near the wall and under the golden drain pipe. Earlier, there used to be a green rectangular stone similar to a prayer niche in that place that exactly denoted the location of the grave. The grave of Hajar was inside the *Hijr* (northern wall of *Ka'bah*) near the Iraqi corner stone, and its specific symbol was a green stone as large as a span and a half. According to Ibn Hosham, Tabari and Ibn Athir and others, there was a seven span distance between the two graves.

It is also said in the narrations by the Ahlul Bayt (a) that the grave of Isma'il (a) and Hajra and the daughters of Isma'il (a) are located in the *Hijr* (northern wall of *Ka'bah*).

It is said in some history books that the Prophet (s) said:

"No Prophet escaped from his tribe unless he sought refuge in the *Ka'bah* and was engaged in worship there until death. It is also quoted that: the graves of Prophet *Hud*, *Sho'aib* and *Saleh* are located between the *Zam Zam* and the position of Ibrahim, and the graves of three hundred Prophets are located in the *Ka'bah*, and another seventy Prophets between the Yemeni and Aswad corners."

Even if this saying is doubtful, there isn't the slightest doubt that Isma'il (a) and his mother Hajar are buried in *Masjid Al Haram*. Thus, the Wahhabis must say no one should pray in *Masjid Al Haram* as it is the site of the graves of Prophets (a) and saints, whereas, Muslims have made these locations mosques. The Prophets (a) and religious erudite used to pray there as well. The Sunni Caliphs and scholars regarded prayer in *Masjid Al Haram* more virtuous than any other place. Even the wall that existed around the grave of the Prophet (s) was not present here, though the graves were even marked with green stones.

4– Regarding Fatima bint Asad the mother of Ali (a), Samhudi quotes Mohammad ibn Hanafiah the son of Ali (a) to have said:

"When Fatima bint Asad passed away, the Messenger of Allah (s) came and ordered them to dig a grave for her. Then a part of the Mosque was hollowed out which is, today, known as the grave of Fatima."

Whether the mosque existed in the time of the Prophet (s) and he buried Fatima in that mosque or it was built later, l there was certainly a mosque built over the grave in the time of Mohammad ibn Hanifiah and no body stopped it.

5– About Mosab ibn Omair and Abdullah ibn Jahsh, Samhudi says:

"Abdul Aziz said: in our view, the correct saying is that Mosab ibn Omair and Abdullah binJahash were buried in a mosque that was built over the grave of Hamzah."

This statement proves that there was a mosque over the grave of Hamzah and these two people were buried in that mosque. Therefore, claiming unlawfulness of building mosques over graves is a baseless claim and there is sufficient evidence opposing this verdict and we have only mentioned a part of it here.

Praying in holy sanctuaries

Wahhabis insist on the prohibition of praying in holy sanctuaries and the shrine of the Prophets (a) and saints. They have different sayings in this regard. Some:

Regard prayers next to graves as null

Consider it an innovation and, thus, unlawful

Deem it undesirable

Believe that prayer next to graves and holy sanctuaries has no virtue.

These views are all very different. If we regard this act as an innovation, besides rendering prayer null, it is an unlawful act; and if it is undesirable, it is similar to praying in the bathroom; it has no merits and praying at home is more virtuous or they are both at the same level.

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"Prayer next to graves is not allowed. Intending worship of graves and spiritual retreat next to graves or imploring for assistance next to graves and lamentation and others as such is also not allowed."

He then adds:

"The scholars regard praying next to graves undesirable and the majority of them have said that this prayer is void since it has been prohibited. It is only the House of Allah (swt) in which prayer in congregation and alone is allowed, and spiritual retreat and other worship, including recitation and reading supplications, is only allowed there."

Mohammad ibn Abd Al Wahhab says:

"None of the previous Imams have said that prayer next to graves and the sanctuaries around it is recommended and none have said that prayer and supplication in those places is more virtuous than other places. They all agree that prayers in mosques and at homes are more

virtuous than those next to the graves of Prophets (a) and pious people."

They have expressed different views in this regard but today, they stop whoever wants to pray next to *Baqi'* or the graves of the Ohud Martyrs, saying this is polytheism.

We shall discuss this case in two parts:

Part one will deal with its legality. Is prayer next to the graves of Prophets (a), Divine Saints, or other graves allowed or not? Is it an innovation, polytheistic, prohibited?

Part two will discussing the virtuosity of such prayer and see if this prayer is lawful, whether praying at home will be equal or more virtuous than it or not?

We shall analyse this subject based on *their* general jurisprudence rulings and the narrations *acceptable to them* and, later on, discuss the Imamiyah jurisprudence in this regard.

Theological and Jurisprudential view

According to the general and common statements on prayer there is no prohibition on praying in grave yards and is as correct as it is in other places. The holy Quran also has not set any limitations on the places of prayer. It has specified certain times for prayer and says:

﴿أَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ لِدُلُوكِ ٱلشَّمۡسِ إِلَىٰ غَسَقِ ٱلَّيۡلِ وَقُرۡءَانَ ٱلۡفَجۡرِۖ إِنَّ قُرۡءَانَ ٱلۡفَجۡرِ كَانَ مَشۡهُودًا﴾

"Maintain the prayer from the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and [observe particularly] the dawn recital. Indeed the dawn recital is attended [by angels]."[1]

It is not permissible to perform noon prayer before noon but, if it was not specified we could have said it is correct to prayer at any time of day and night since this includes all times. There *are limits set* for the

1. *Surah al-Isra'*, Chapter 17, verse 78.

time of prayer, so they must be followed. There are *no limits* set on the *place of prayer*. It is possible to pray in any spot on earth and this is specified and implied. If we find any evidence that prohibits praying in certain locations, those places will be excluded from the general implication of the evidence. If we find a reason for undesirability, then prayer in that spot will be undesirabile but surely permissible.

The Quran and narrations quoted from Shia and Sunni resources confirm that any location is suitable. For example the Prophet (s) is quoted to have said:

"The earth has been set as a place of prostration and a purifier for me."

Or "The whole earth is a place of prostration."

There are numerous narration quoted in *Sahih Muslim* which indicate permission to pray at any spot. For example:

"When the time for prayer comes, pray wherever you are as the location you are at is a place of prostration."

In this statement *Aynama* indicates generality. This generality requires me to pray even if I am in a graveyard and congregation prayer is being performed, or whenever it is time for prayers.

"The earth is a place of prostration for you, so whenever it is time for prayer, do pray in that place."

Haythama means anywhere and this word indicates generality of locations. Thus the verses and narrations have not set any boundary on location.

Prayer in some places, such as bathrooms and its likes, is undesirable and this has been stated in the narrations.There are also some titles which are unlawful to commit and any act under that title including prayers is unlawful; for example, if a house is usurped any form of action in that house is unlawful. Therefore, residing and praying in that house is not allowed and this unlawfulness is not only exclusive to prayers but to any action. Also, in places where there is fear of life, loss of wealth, fear of accusations and other such cases, prayer will be unlawful and undesirable there.

We do not have a single narration, in the Sunni books of narration that considers prayer in graveyards unlawful. If there was such a narration, Mohammad ibn Abd Al Wahhab and Ibn Taymiyyah would have used them as proof. Surely they have quoted some narrations, when discussing *Masjids*, which imply the prohibition of acquiring the graves of Prophets (a) as *Masjids*. But there is no mention of "do not pray in front of graves," in the general narrations. Thus, based on the requirement of general principles and rulings and Quranic implications and the narrations quoted by Sunnis, prayer is allowed in any location.

The history of Islam and prayer next to graves

The history of Islam is valid evidence on this issue. Here we shall state some examples:

1– Prayer has been performed in *Masjid Al Haram* from the time of the Prophet (s) until today, inspite of the grave of Hajar and Isma'il (a) and other Prophets (a) in the *Hijr Isma'il* and periphery of *Ka'bah*. It is said in some narrations that the graves of three hundred Prophets are located in *Masjid Al Haram*. Yet, Muslims have been performing prayers, whether recommended or *wajib*, sole or in congregation and there has been no prohibition ever. However today, during congregational prayer, they empty the *Hijr Isma'il* for no reason given. Before this, they used to stand inside this *Hijr* during congregational prayers. Nevertheless, Shia and Sunni perform recommended or obligatory prayers inside and outside the *Hijr* and no one stops them.

2– Our other evidence is the mosque built by the government for the People of *Kahf* discussed earlier. They built the mosque where the burial place of the People of Cave was. Most certainly a mosque is not a place of leisure, sports or eating, but only for prayer and supplication. Surely worship has had its own forms in different times, but a mosque has always been a place for prostration, prayer, worship, and other devotional acts.

Neshaburi, Kashaf, Jalalein, etc., said that the second group decided to build a mosque in which Muslims could pray and seek blessings. This makes this event evidence on the permission for praying next to graves.

3– The following narration has been quoted by the historians and authors of *Sahih* e.g. Beyhaqi, Hakim:

"Fatima (s) the daughter of the Prophet (s), used to visit the grave of her uncle Hamzah and pray next to it and cry."

However this narration does not say when this took place, but there are chances that it was after the demise of the Prophet (s), because they usurped the right of Ali (a) and showed disrespect and oppression towards the family of the Prophet (s). Fatima (s) was extremely upset and was engaged in prayer and supplication every Friday, or based on some other narration, every two or three days, and cried next to the grave of Hamzah and the Ohud Martyrs. Surely there was another reason. They didnot let her to cry in the city as it disturbed them, as it was a form of protest against the government, and they feared its cosequences.

Whether this took place in the time of the Prophet (s) or after his demise is not the disputed matter. What is confirmed is that Fatima (s) did pray next to the grave of Hamzah.

The query and the answer

The query that may arise here is that if we assume that Fatimah (s) did so, can her sayings and acts be used as evidence to issue verdicts on permissibility of praying next to graves?

In Shia belief, her sayings and acts are definitely evidence. Based on their narrations and rulings, the Sunnis also have to consider her sayings as evidence since they have quoted the Messenger of Allah (s) telling Fatima (s):

"Allah will become angry if you become angry and be pleased when you are content."

If she does somethings every week and is happy about it, will Allah (swt) not to be happy about it, too? Is it basically possible for someone with such a status to do something that Allah (swt) is not pleased about? Therefore since Fatima (s) was happy about this act Allah (swt) is also pleased with it.

In addition to this, when according to Sunni view, the sayings of companions is counted as evidence; Fatima (s) the daughter of the

Prophet (s) is not any less than the companions. Of course the issue of *considering every companion as just is a controversial one* but there are no controversies about Fatima (s), as she is the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (s) and has been raised in his home under his supervision and her virtues are beyond *Tawatur*[1] boundaries and thus her sayings and acts are evidence. If we are to take the saying and acts of Abu Hurairah and Khalid ibn Walid as evidence, can we say the acts and sayings of Fatimah (s) are not evidence? Therefore, there are no controversies and her acts are definite evidence for us.

4– As discussed earlier, the grave of the Prophet (s) was in the house of Ayesha for many years and Ayesha used to pray next to his grave. Two more graves were added after the Prophet (s) and still Ayesha lived there for forty or fifty years and prayed.

Therefore, not only are there no reasons to make praying next to graves unlawful, innovative, or null, but there is evidence on its religious legality.

Our discussion is regarding the prayer read only for Allah (swt). Prayer for other than Allah (swt) or the owner of the grave or prostrating for him is undoubtedly polytheism. However, prayer for Allah (swt) next to the grave of the Prophets (a) and the Pure Imams (a) or even in normal graveyards is not unlawful.

Supplication next to graves

Generally supplications next to graves are not prohibited and are considered lawful. Asking for something from Allah (swt) anywhere, including next to graves cannot be an unlawful act. What is the problem with asking Allah (swt) for something in the shrines of the Prophet (s) or the pure Imams (a) is just like asking for something at home or at the mosque? Is it an innovation in religion and unlawful? The answer is definitely 'No'. None of the verses and narrations that have encouraged supplication have specified any location nor considered supplication in any place to be unlawful and the Quranic verse says:

1. An expression in Tradition sciences which means successive transmission.

﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ٱدۡعُونِيٓ أَسۡتَجِبۡ لَكُمۡۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسۡتَكۡبِرُونَ عَنۡ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدۡخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ﴾

"Your Lord has said, "Call Me, and I will hear you!" Indeed those who are disdainful of my worship will enter hell in utter humility."[1]

This verse sets no limits and says that wherever and in whatever term you pray He will answer. Therefore, the principle of legality of supplicating anywhere is definite.

The evidence for prayer applies to supplications as well since supplication is always performed before, between, or after prayer. Thus supplication next to graves is acceptable. How can a supplication that has no traces of polytheism be against religious law? How is it an innovation? What kind of polytheism is it? Assuming the supplication is next to a grave, and the grave has no role in my supplication and I am only asking Allah (swt) for something, how can this be an innovation in religion?

Spiritual retreat next to graves

Ibn Taymiyyah regards three issues to be illegal: prayer, supplication and spiritual retreat. We spoke about prayer and supplication and now we must discuss spiritual retreat as well.

Eetikaf (spiritual retreat) is a valuable legal worship which is originally performed in mosques, and if we want to become a *Mu'takif* (the person in the state of spiritual retreat) in any places, we will need reason. If there is no evidence on *Eetikaf* in other places then we must say it is not permitted. We have no evidence, so we also say that *Eetikaf* is only in mosques and is not legal in any other place even in the Shrines of the Pure Imams (a) that are not mosques, it is not allowed.

In the view of Shia jurists, it is not possible to perfom *Eetikaf* in every mosque and is only legal in four mosques: 1-*Masjid Al Haram*, 2-*MAsjid Al Nabbi,* 3– *Kufah mosque*, 4– *Basra mosque* and the *Jamee*

1. *Surah al-Qafer*, Chapter 40, verse 60.

(main) mosque of any city, which is a mosque in which Friday prayer is held or in which a large group gather. Thus, the issue of *Eetikaf* is clear and comprehendible.

The virtues of prayer in the sanctuaries of Prophets (a) and saints

We shall now discuss whether prayer near these graves and places has any virtue, as well as, permission or not?

Our discussion is about the intrinsic worth of prayer next to the grave of the Prophets (a) and the saints, not next to any grave, as we believe that prayer in graveyards is undesirable.

The question now is: is there any intellectual or legal prohibition to saying a place is more virtuous and preferred to other places because a religious and divine character has been buried inside it?

In our view there is evidence in history that proves that these places have virtues. A land in which a divine character has been buried, or passed by, or prayed, becomes more virtuous and preferred to other places. Here we shall mention some examples:

1– The first and second Caliph have been buried next to the grave of the Prophet (s), clearly because of the nobility and virtues of the burial place of the Prophet (s) over other places, otherwise, there was no reason for those two to be buried there.

2– Imam Hasan Mujtaba (a) made a will to be taken next to the grave of the Prophet (s) and, in some quotations, it is said that he said: "If they stop you, bury me in Baqi'." According to the quotation of Sheikh Mufid in *Irshad*, he said in his will: "Take me there to renew my vows." The presence of the Prophet (s) in that place had its own effect and Imam Hasan (a) wished to be taken next to the grave of his grandfather so that he could circumambulate it and renew his vows. *Bani Omayyah* stopped this and did not let the will be put into action, but this will shows the virtues of that place. The very fact that they stopped them shows the virtues of the grave of the Prophet (s), since in their own mind, they wanted to stop Imam Hasan (a) achieving more virtues by being buried next to the Prophet (s), and his name being mentioned with the name of the Prophet (s). This attitude clearly speaks of the virtues of that place.

3– The noble verse that says:

﴿وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا ٱلْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَٱتَّخِذُوا۟ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ وَعَهِدْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَٱلْعَـٰكِفِينَ وَٱلرُّكَّعِ ٱلسُّجُودِ﴾

"*And [remember] when We made the House a place of reward for mankind and a sanctuary,[declaring]," Take the venue of prayer from Abraham's Station." We charged Abraham and Ishmael [with its upkeep, saying]," Purify My House for those who go around it, [for] those who make it a retreat and [for] those who bow and prostrate.*"[1]

Maqami Ibrahim (the standing place of Ibrahim) is a stone on which Prophet Ibrahim (a) used to stand while building the *Ka'bah*. The holy Quran orders us to make this place into a place of prayer. This means just the standing of Prophet Ibrahim (a) to build the house has made this place noble and virtuous.

If the standing of a Prophet over a stone makes that stone sacred, will the land that has encased the body of a Prophet (a) or a martyr or one of the saints of Allah (swt) will not obtain nobility and virtue?

4– The fourth example is the narration Suyuti has quoted among the *Me'eraj* (spiritual ascent of the Prophet -s-) traditions. The summary of this tradition is as follows:

"Truly the Prophet (s) descended in Madina, *Toor Sina* and *Beyt Laham* and prayed. Gabriel (a) then asked him: "Do you know where you prayed? The first location is the pure land to which you will migrate. The second location is *Toor Sina* where Musa (a) spoke to Allah (swt). The third location is *Beyt Laham* where *Isa* (a) was born."

The *Me'eraj* of the Prophet (s) was a divine journey and every where the Prophet (s) stopped, was by the order of Allah (swt). Also, the prayer the Prophet (s) performed at these three locations was by the

1. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 125.

order of Allah (swt). Some interpretations say that Gabriel (a) said to the Prophet (s): "Descend." This statement shows that this journey and all its details were by the order of Allah (swt).

The order to pray in these three locations shows these places are virtuous and respectable for some reason, otherwise, why didn't the Prophet (s) descend in any other place?

At that time, more than five thousand years had passed after the event of the *Toor* Mountain and six hundred years after the birth of Prophet *Isa* (a). However, through this visit, Allah (swt) was reminiscing the greatness and virtue of these places. Now would it be improper to say the place Imam Husayn (a) and all the Bani Hashim youngsters and the children and his companions were martyred in the way of Allah (swt) have virtue, value and superiority? Isn't Husayn (a) the very *Reyhanah* of the Messenger of Allah (s)? Isn't he the Master of the youth of paradise? Isn't he the one the Prophet (s) expressed love towards? Isn't he the one about whose virtues many narration have been quoted in Sunni narrations?

Therefore, wherever a spiritual event that is reminiscent of efforts, sacrifices, propagation of religion, and martyrdoms for the sake of religion happens, that place will gain superiority and nobility.

The virtues of supplicating next to graves and special places

As we said before supplication is lawful, permitted, and most desirable. In the order for supplication, no special place has been specified and it is possible to remember Allah (swt) and perform supplication even in places unsuitable for prayer. For example, becoming penitent and raising ones hands and praying and asking for forgiveness, even in the bathroom is not blameworthy, nor an innovation in religion, but a perfectly moral act. Apart from legality, supplication has more virtues in some places than others, and there are no legal or intellectuals barriers to this virtue.

Why can such valuable places not have more virtue when a stone has gained value because Prophet Ibrahim (a) stood upon it, or the place where Hajar crossed between the *Safa* and *Marwa* mountains, or the *Hijr Isma'il* because Hajar and Isma'il (a) have been buried there are valuable?

The late Allamah Amini quotes Shams Al Din Jerzi who is a Sunni, saying in rejection of Wahhabis in *Hasn Al Hasin*:

"If prayer is not answered next to the grave of the Prophet (s) then where would it be answered?"

Unknowingly, Ibn Taymiyyah confesses to occurance of supplication next to graves in a treatise called *Ziyaratul Qubur* and says:

"When the companions used to come to the grave of the Prophet (s), they would send Salam to him and when they wanted to pray they would not face the noble grave but the *Qiblah* and only call upon Allah (swt)."

For the time being, we are not discussing whether there are any problems to standing in front of graves and praying or not. But this saying shows that the companions used to perform supplication next to graves. The Wahhabis mostly claim that a supplication next to graves has no virtues and can even be innovation in religion. However, here it says the companions use to come to the grave of the Prophet (s) and supplicate, which shows that supplication next to his (s) grave has virtues otherwise there was no reason for them to leave home and perform supplication in this place.

I repeat, it is forbidden and polytheistic if one does not intend Allah (swt) when perfoming supplications, and goes beyond, imploring for assistance and considering these great people equal to Allah (swt). This is very obvious and no Muslim or wise man can condone such a thing.

Ibn Taymiyyah also says "when performing supplication, the companions would not stand in front of the grave." This is also debatable, since Samhudi has quoted an event that makes the saying of Ibn Taymiyyah not definite. The event is related to Mansur Dawaniqi and Malik (the head of Maliki sect), which took place in Masjid Al Nabbi in Madina. He writes:

"While in the mosque, Mansur Dawaniqi asked Malik ibn Anas, the Malikite Imam: 'O Aba Abdillah! Should I face *Qiblah* or the grave of the Prophet (s) when performing supplication?"

It can be perceived from the question Mansur askes Malik that not all people used to face *Qiblah* when supplicating; a group would face the

grave and another face the *Qiblah*. If facing *Qiblah* was common and ordinary, no one would have faced the grave, because standing towards the grave would have been regarded as polytheism, and this question would have been inappropriate. Mansure Dawaniqi wasn't an ordinary person and, they claim, he was knowledgable. So, such a person raised this question.

Besides this, Mansur was not asking about the permissibility of this act but asking which is superior, facing *Qiblah* or the grave? Thus the actual act was a common one. Malik responds to this question clearly and renders many of the claims of Ibn Taymiyyah null. He says:

"Why should you turn your face away when the Prophet (s) is your means (of nearness) to Allah (swt) and the means for your father Prophet Adam (a) on the Day of Judgment. Thus face the grave and ask him to be your intercessor and he will intervene for you in Allah's (swt) presence."

Malik is referring to the fact that Prophet Adam (a) received some words from Allah (swt) which contained the names of the Messenger of Allah (s) and the Infallibles (a), to implore to them for intercession, and his repentance was accepted. The holy Quran also has refered to this event:

﴿فَتَلَقَّىٰٓ ءَادَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ كَلِمَٰتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيۡهِۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ﴾

"Then Adam received certain words from his Lord, and He turned to him clemently. Indeed He is the All-clement, the All-merciful."[1]

Nevertheless it is clear that supplication and prayer next to the graves of the Prophets (a), and saints has virtues, but is virtueless next to the graves of ordinary people. Prayer or supplication next to the grave of ordinary people is, however, not polytheism or innovation in religion.

The view of the Imamiyah Jurisprudence

The Imamiyah Jurisprudece has come to us from the Ahlul Bayt (a), which says praying in graveyards while facing the grave, or praying between two graves is undesirable, and this can be removed by

1. *Surah al-Baqarah*, Chapter 2, verse 37.

placing a barrier or moving ten cubits away. This is not stated in general narrations. The narrations from the Ahlul Bayt (a) say:

"The whole earth is a place for prostration except for the sewage dump, bathroom, and the graveyard."

Prayer facing the grave or in between graves has been prohibited very evidently in other narrations. In addition to these narrations we have other narrations that say prayer next to graves is not unlawful. When both group of narrations are valid we must follow both as much as possible and the only solution to this would be accepting the verdict of undesirability.

Urwatul Wothqa has mentioned thirty two places under the title "places where prayer is undesirable". Twenty four to twenty seven cases are related to prayer in graveyards and over graves. However, prayer in holy sanctuaries and next to the grave of the Prophets (a) and saints is lawful, has virtues, and is even superior to mosques. The statement of *Urwatul Wothqa* in this regard is as follows:

"Prayer in the sanctuaries of pure Imams (a) is recommended since these are the houses Allah (swt) has ordered to be held high and the name of Allah (swt) to be called in them. These sanctuaries are superior to mosques and it is said in traditions that one prayer next to the grave of Ali (a) is equal to two hundred thousand prayers."

There are many narrations in this regard in the *Bihar Al Anwar* and *Wasael Al Shia*, including this narration quoted from Imam Sadiq (a):

"Whoever performs one prayer behind the grave of Imam Husayn (a), will attend Allah's (swt) presence on the Day of Judgment with a light surrounding him, and as a sign of appreciation for respect, everything will be in his command."

In another narration he (a) says:

"Obligatory prayers in the shrine of Imam Husayn (a) have the same reward as Hajj and recommended prayers, the same reward as Umrah."

In other narrations the shrine of Imam Husayn (a) has been regarded as equal to *Masjid Al Haram* and *Masjid al Nabbi* and *Masjid Kufah* and even though the prayer of a traveller is shortened in Imam

Husayn's (a) shrine, he can offer full prayer. It is for this reason that in continuation of the statement in *Urwatul Wothqa* we read:

"It is also recommended to pray in the shrines and tombs of the Prophets (a), the saints, the scholars, and the pious people, and even the ones alive."

The more recent jurists have added footnotes to this and said: 'They must pray in the shrines of the scholars, the saints and the pious people with the *Raja* intention and not *Vorood*. And this shows that there are no special reasons for this act in places other than the shrines and graves of the Prophets (a) and saints.

Thus according to the Shia point of view, prayer in ordinary graveyards is undesirable, but, "if he places a cover between himself and the grave, moves back ten cubits from the grave, the undesirability will be removed."

It seems that the narration we have received about the virtues of prayer, supplication and visiting the graves of the Prophets (s) and the pure Imams (a) are also used as proof by Sunnis since the Pure Imams (a) have said: "Whatever we quote is from the messenger of Allah (s)," and the Sunnis do accept the children and family of the Messenger of Allah (s) as much as a trustworthy narrator. The majory treat the Infallible pure Imams (a) with respect.

The pure Imams (a) have also quoted many narrations from Ali (a). Some Sunni books, even e.g. *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal* have an exclusive chapter on the narrations quoted from Ali (a). Our pure Imams (a) were closer to Ali (a) than any narrator. It is said in our narrations that the Prophet (s) used to speak about different issues and Imam Ali (a) would record it in a book and this book was then passed down to the next pure Imam (a). For this reason many narrations refer to this book and say: "This is what is written in the book of Ali (a)..."

There are certain principles for adhering to a tradition, especially the trustworthinss of the narrators. The Sunnis also have certain principles and based on both sects the Ahlul Bayt (a) narrations are considered the most valid narrations. However, it is very sorrowful and astonishing that they do not quote from Ali (a) except in rare cases and do not refer to him in their verdicts. They do not even pay attention to the narrations they have quoted themselves.

PART 4
ASKING FOR A NEED

– Asking the Prophet (s) and the divine saints for a need

– The true factor is Allah

Asking the Prophet (s) and the divine saints for a need

The Wahhabis criticise asking the Prophet (s) and the divine saints for a need. We shall first analyse the issue of asking the ones alive for a need, and later, from the dead. If we were in the time of the holy Prophet (s) and the pure Imams (a) we could have asked for the need in three ways:

A) Asking each other's help for a need is a common thing therefore, we could ask the Prophet (s), the pure Imams (a), the saints or the pious people to do a certain job for us.

B) The other act is when we ask the Prophet(s), the pure Imams, the saints or the pious people to pray for us and ask Allah (swt) for goodness in this world and the next.

C) The third act is asking the Prophet (s), the pure Imams (a) and the saint and the pious people to do something extraordinary for us; for example, heal our patient without using medicine, or remove a certain hardship from us. We cannot ask the dead ones for the first need. But the other two can be asked from the souls of the Prophet (s) and the saints who are close to Allah (swt), ask them to become our intercessors before Allah (swt), or, we can ask them to pray for the healing of the patient, or resolve the problems and difficulties we have. Wahhabis regard these pleas as polytheistic, and attack them severely.

The first act is unproblematic to Wahhabis and they accept it.

The second act of asking the Prophet (s) and the saints to pray for us is okay. People used to go to the Prophet (s) during his lifetime and ask him to pray for them. In addition there are some verses that confirm this meaning; for example:

﴿خُذۡ مِنۡ أَمۡوَٰلِهِمۡ صَدَقَةٗ تُطَهِّرُهُمۡ وَتُزَكِّيهِم بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيۡهِمۡۖ إِنَّ صَلَوٰتَكَ سَكَنٞ لَّهُمۡۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"Take charity from their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby, and bless them. Indeed your blessing is a comfort to them, and Allah is all-hearing, all-knowing."[1]

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ وَلَوۡ أَنَّهُمۡ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمۡ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسۡتَغۡفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسۡتَغۡفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابٗا رَّحِيمٗا﴾

"We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allah's leave. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful."[2]

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمۡ تَعَالَوۡاْ يَسۡتَغۡفِرۡ لَكُمۡ رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ لَوَّوۡاْ رُءُوسَهُمۡ وَرَأَيۡتَهُمۡ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُم مُّسۡتَكۡبِرُونَ﴾

"When they are told," Come, that Allah's Apostle may plead for forgiveness for you," they twist their heads, and you see them turn away while they are disdainful."[3]

﴿قَالُواْ يَٰٓأَبَانَا ٱسۡتَغۡفِرۡ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا خَٰطِـِٔينَ ٩٧ قَالَ سَوۡفَ أَسۡتَغۡفِرُ لَكُمۡ رَبِّيٓۖ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلۡغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ﴾

"They said," Father! Plead [with Allah] for forgiveness of our sins! We have indeed been erring."(97)He said," I shall plead with my

1. *Surah al-Tawbah*, Chapter 9, verse 103.
2. *Surah al-Nisa'*, Chapter 4, verse 64.
3. *Surah al-Munafequn*, Chapter 63, verse 5.

Lord to forgive you; indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful."(98).”[1]

﴿وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلرِّجۡزُ قَالُواْ يَٰمُوسَى ٱدۡعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِندَكَۖ لَئِن كَشَفۡتَ عَنَّا ٱلرِّجۡزَ لَنُؤۡمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرۡسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ﴾

“Whenever a plague fell upon them, they would say," O Moses, invoke your Lord for us by the covenant He has made with you. If you remove the plague from us, we will certainly believe in you and let the Children of Israel go along with you.""[2]

Thus when it was allowed to go to the presence of the Prophets (a) during their lifetime and ask them to pray, there is no problem with going to them after their death and asking them to pray, considering the fact that their souls are alive in the *Barzakh* (period between death and resurrection).

Concerning the third act, Allah (swt) has blessed some of the Prophets (a) and saints, throughout history, with special features and extra ordinary powers that allowed them to perform extraordinary acts that were not possible with natural causes and powers. An example is the cane of Musa (a) that turned into a dragon once thrown on the ground. This transformation had its own causes and grounds that had been given to Prophet Musa (a) by Allah (swt). However, only Prophet Musa (a) was aware of them and no one else. These were miracles and a miracle is some thing beyond the extraordinary acts performed by some Hindu ascetics. They cannot be called miracle since anyone who practices them can do them. But a miracle is entirely an extraordinary act which indicates that a metaphysical power beyond the material world was involved and no matter how knowledgeable and powerful one might be, no one can perform the miracle of Musa (a) unless Allah (swt) places the required power in his hand.

Or, how Prophet Isa (a) cured diseases such as congenital blindness and leprosy or brought the dead back to life with the permission of

1. *Surah Yosuf*, Chapter ١٢, verse 97-98.

2. *Surah al-A’raf*, Chapter 7, verse 134.

Allah (swt). These were miraculous acts and no one apart from Isa (a) was able to perform them. In the holy Quran Allah (swt) says about the miracle of Isa (a):

﴿وَرَسُولاً إِلَىٰ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ أَنِّي قَدۡ جِئۡتُكُم بِـَٔايَةٖ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡۖ أَنِّيٓ أَخۡلُقُ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيۡـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيۡرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيۡرَۢا بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۖ وَأُبۡرِئُ ٱلۡأَكۡمَهَ وَٱلۡأَبۡرَصَ وَأُحۡيِ ٱلۡمَوۡتَىٰ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۖ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا تَأۡكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمۡۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَأٓيَةٗ لَّكُمۡ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤۡمِنِينَ﴾

"and he will be an apostle to the Children of Israel, and he will declare, " I have certainly brought you a sign from your Lord: I will create for you out of clay the form of a bird, then I will breathe into it, and it will become a bird by Allah's leave. And I heal the blind and the leper and I revive the dead by Allah's leave. And I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. There is indeed a sign in that for you, should you be faithful."[1]

Isa (a) was not independent in performing these acts and it was Allah (swt) who gave him such powers.

We read about the throne of Bilquis, the Queen of Saba' in the Quran:

﴿قَالَ ٱلَّذِي عِندَهُۥ عِلۡمٞ مِّنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ أَنَا۠ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِۦ قَبۡلَ أَن يَرۡتَدَّ إِلَيۡكَ طَرۡفُكَۚ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهُ مُسۡتَقِرًّا عِندَهُۥ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِن فَضۡلِ رَبِّي لِيَبۡلُوَنِيٓ ءَأَشۡكُرُ أَمۡ أَكۡفُرُۖ وَمَن شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشۡكُرُ لِنَفۡسِهِۦۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٞ﴾

"The one, who had knowledge of the Book, said, "I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye." So when he saw it set near him, he said, "This is by the grace of my Lord, to test me if I will give thanks or be ungrateful. And whoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his

1. *Surah Al 'Imran*, Chapter 3, verse 49.

own sake. And whoever is ungrateful, [should know that] my Lord is indeed all-sufficient, all-generous.".”[1]

When Allah has blessed some people with such powers with which, by the will of Allah (swt), they can perform such extraordinary acts, what would be wrong if someone went to them and said: O, Prophet of Allah (s) please heal my patient! *It is important to believe, when one goes to a doctor or the Prophet (s) or the Infallible Imams (a), that they are not independent in curing the patient and restoring the sight of the blind. It is in fact Allah (swt) who has given them such powers.* There is no difference between normal or extraordinary jobs in this case. *The Prophet (s) and the pure Imams (a) are not independent agents and are only intermediatories. It would be polytheistic if someone believed that they were independent of Allah (swt).*

Thus the conclusion from this discussion is that when the devotees implore the pure Imams (a) for assistance, they believe they are they are the intermediaries between Allah and people.

Now the question is: Is it permissible to implore for assistance once the Prophet (s) and the pure Imams (a) have passed away?

It could be impermissible, but not be polytheism. The Wahhabis say that apart from not being permitted it is also polytheistic.

1. *Surah al-Naml*, Chapter 27, verse 40.

The true factor is Allah

Even if it appears that it is the Prophet (s) and the pure Imams (a) healing the patient, in reality it is Allah (swt) who has bequeathed this to them. Thus we believe that when we ask the Prophet (s), the pure Imams (a), and the pious ones to heal our patient, we are in fact asking Allah (swt) to do this. Therefore, if asking help for common jobs is not polytheistic, it would also not be polytheistic asking help for extraordinary jobs. Why do the Wahhabis say one is not polytheism but the other is?

We ask the Wahhabis why they don't consider going to doctors, when ill, as polytheistic, but when an ill person goes to the Prophet (s) or the pure Imams (a) and seeks healing they regard it polytheistic? What is the difference between these two?

One goes to the doctor for his illness and the other goes to the Prophet (s) and the divine saints. What difference do they see between these two?

We shall repeat that when we implore the Prophet (s) and the saints for assistance, we do not regard them as independent agents but consider them as the intermediatory of Divine blessings and say: 'We do not have any credit on the Divine threshold. You are dear and near to Allah (swt), please ask Allah (swt) to heal our patient.' What is the problem with this?

The Wahhabi response

1– The Wahhabis say it is permissible to ask each other for common needs and not be polytheistic because they are not divine acts. Common people can fulfill each other's common needs. However, it is not permissible to ask the needs from the servant of Allah that only Allah (swt) can answer, as that would be polytheistic.

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"If any one comes to the grave of the Prophet (s) or a pious person and asks them for his need, or seeks help for cure of an illness or

paying of a debt, or other affairs for which no one has the power but Allah (swt) he has committed evident polytheism and it is compulsory to ask the committor to seek penitence. If he repents he will be forgiven, if not he will be killed."

In *Ziaratul Qubur*, Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"If the desired is something that no one other than Allah (swt) is able to fulfil, such a request from a creature will be an act of polytheism and the asker, a polytheist. This kind of polytheism is the type which considers angels and idols as Creators or, Jesus and his mother as god. It is like asking a creature, whether dead or alive: "Forgive my sins, or support me before my enemies, or heal my patient, or grant me and my family health, or my animal health, or loyalty to religion. The servant is able to fulfill cases other than these. Thus, such requests are allowed in some situations and not allowed in some others, because asking the creature for something is sometimes allowed and sometimes not allowed."

Up to where he says:

"The only request and demand that is allowed is supplication for the faithful brother."

In response to Ibn Taymiyyah and the Wahhabis we say: What criterion are you using to distinguish between godly and ungodly acts? Is the criterion the normality and abnormality of the act, or is it the disability of the agents, apart from Allah (swt), from performing the act? If the agent from whom the need is asked is able to fulfill it, then asking is not polytheistic, and if the need is something which others are unable to fulfill, then it is polytheistic?

What we perceive from this statement is that Ibn Taymiyyah considers the criterion for polytheism to be:

If they are able to fulfil the need, then it is not polytheistic, but seeking the need from one who is unable to fulfil it is polytheistic.

4. Repentance

On its own particular terms, repentance is one of the means that the sinful person resorts to; and when engaged in, it makes the person liable to receive the Truth's Remission. Thus, in narratives, the word 'Shafi' (intercessor) has been attributed to the word 'taubah' (repentance). The Commander of the Believers (AS) stated:

«لا شَفِيعَ أنجَحُ مِنَ التَّوبَةِ» [1]

« لا شَفِيعَ أنجَحُ مِنَ الإستِغفار» [2]

«لا شَفِيعَ أنجَحُ مِنَ الإعتذار» [3]

"There is no intercessor more helpful than repentance, asking God's forgiveness and pleading (in the Court of God)." The reason why repentance is more effective than any intercessor in saving a person is because:

Firstly, repentance is one of the intercessors connected to a person in this world and based on God's promise that Divine Remission is for those who repent:

﴿وَإِنِّى لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا﴾

"And, verily I am the Most Forgiving unto him who repenteth and believeth and doth good …"[4]

Secondly, intercession of repentance is effective in relation to all sins. This means that if a polytheist and disbeliever repents, returns to God's fold and submits to Islam, God's Remission shall certainly apply to him.

The Glorious Qur'an states:

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1. Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. 11, page 265.
2. Ghorar al-Hekam, vol. 2, page 840.
3. Ibid.
4. Surah Ta Ha, verse 82.

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"Verily God forgiveth not that (anything) be associated with Him and forgiveth anything besides this to whomsoever He pleaseth."[1]

It means that any person who dies a polytheist without repenting for his polytheism and faithlessness is most unlikely to benefit from Divine Remission; whereas, sins of individuals who die monotheists, believing in Islam, are likely to be forgiven even if they have not repented for their other sins.

Thirdly, with the conditions that apply to it, repentance reforms the sinner and his past sins are erased in the light of the repentance. The Commander of the Believers (AS) stated:

«ثَمَرَةُ التَّوبَةِ إستِدراكُ فَوارِطِ النَّفس»

"The benefit of repentance is that it makes up for misdeeds of the carnal soul." [2]

5– Supplication of the Divine Apostles

Another type of intercession that, like repentance, is realized in this world is supplication of the Divine apostles, angels, saints of God and pious believers, which is likely to result in Divine Remission in this world if applied to a person.

In the story of Prophet Joseph (SA) we observe that when the sons of Prophet Jacob (AS) regretted what they had done, they turned towards their father and said:

﴿يَٰٓأَبَانَا ٱسۡتَغۡفِرۡ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا خَٰطِـِٔينَ﴾

"O father! Ask thou forgiveness for us, Verily we are guilty."[3]

In reply, Prophet Jacob (SA) stated:

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1. Surah An-Nisa, verse 116.
2. Al-Mustadrak Al-Wasa'il, vol. 12, pages 86 to 130.
3. Surah Yusuf, verse 97.

﴿سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّيٓ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ﴾

"Soon I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord; Verily He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."

Similarly, concerning the Honorable Apostle of Islam (SA), the Quran states:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمْ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا﴾

"… And if they, when they were unjust to themselves (sinned), had only come unto thee and sought pardon of God and the Apostle (also) had asked pardon for them, surely would they have found God Oft-returning and Most Merciful."

Concerning the angels, it commands:

﴿وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَن فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ﴾

"…while the angels are (there) celebrating the praise of their Lord and seeking forgiveness for those on earth; Be it known that verily, God, He (alone) is the Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

Again on another occasion, it commands:

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ ٱلْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُۥ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِۦ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَٱغْفِرْ سَبِيلَكَ وَٱتَّبَعُواْ تَابُواْ لِلَّذِينَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ ٱلْجَحِيمِ﴾

"Those who bear the 'Arsh' (the Throne of God's Supreme Authority) and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and seek forgiveness for those who believe in Him, saying: 'Our

Lord! Thou comprehendeth all things in (Thy) mercy and knowledge, therefore, forgive Thou those who turn (unto Thee) and follow Thy way, and save them from the torment of Hell.'"

The supplication of prophets, saints, angels and pious believers, is a kind of intercession, which saves man from the effects and punishments of sins. However, we do not find any instance in the narratives where forgiveness means 'intercession', although the word 'intercessor' has been applied to repentance, deed etc …

The intercession on the Day of Resurrection – bringing a plea to God, is an intercession undertaken by those closest to the Divine Court in this world.

All four types of intercession, are realized in this world. Following such intercession, individuals benefit from forgiveness most probably in this world, while they shall benefit from its effect in the other world as well.

6. Intercession of God's Remission

Figurative intercession includes the intercession that will take place for Divine Remission, forgiveness and pardoning of sins on the Day of Resurrection – and it has been the object of criticism and diatribe. Qur'anic verses in connection with intercession – that validate and invalidate it – have made the Day of Resurrection the occasion of its realization. From the series of these Qur'anic verses, one arrives at the conclusion that on the Day of Resurrection, some intercessions will prove effective while others, ineffective. Here, we refer to some of these verses:

١- ﴿وَٱتَّقُواْ يَوۡمٗا لَّا تَجۡزِي نَفۡسٌ عَن نَّفۡسٖ شَيۡـٔٗا وَلَا يُقۡبَلُ مِنۡهَا شَفَٰعَةٞ﴾

"Guard yourselves against the day wherein no soul shall compensate for another nor shall intercession be accepted from it…" [1]

1. Surah Al Baqarah, verse 48.

٢- ﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَنفِقُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَـٰكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِىَ يَوْمٌ لَّا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَـٰعَةٌ﴾

"O, ye who believe! Spend (in alms) out of what We have provided you with, ere the day cometh wherein there shall be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession …"[1]

٣- ﴿يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا تَنفَعُ ٱلشَّفَـٰعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَرَضِىَ لَهُۥ قَوْلًا﴾

"On that day shall avail no intercession (of any) save (that of) whom God hath permitted, and whose word He is pleased with."[2]

٤- ﴿وَكَم مِّن مَّلَكٍ فِى ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ لَا تُغْنِى شَفَـٰعَتُهُمْ شَيْـًٔا إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعْدِ أَن يَأْذَنَ ٱللَّهُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيَرْضَىٰٓ﴾

"And how many angels there are in heaven, whose intercession is of no avail at all, except that God permitteth whomsoever He willeth and chooseth."[3]

By reflecting on the Qur'an's verses, it becomes clear that the intercession of the Glorious Qur'an shall occur on the Day of Resurrection. On that day, a group of individuals shall intercede by the leave of God for a number of sinners who deserve intercession.

1. Surah Al Baqarah, verse 254.
2. Surah Ta Ha, verse 109.
3. Surah An Najm, verse 26.

Intercession,
getting rid of the impurities of the carnal soul

It is essential to explain two critical preliminaries and one point, in order to clarify the meaning of intercession and its difference from human intercessions.

First preliminary: the All-Embracing Divine Compassion

One general principle applicable throughout the world of creation, the world of nature, the metaphysical world, and the afterlife, is that Divine Compassion is all-embracing and dominates all things. In supplications, we say to God:

«يا من سبقت رحمَتُهُ غَضَبَه. »

"O, He, Whose compassion dominates His Wrath!"

In the beginning of the "Komeil Supplication" we read:

«اللهمَّ إنّی أسئَلُكَ بِرَحمَتِكَ الَّتی وَسِعَت كُلَّ شَیءٍ»

"O God! I seek Thy Favor because Thy compassion embraces all things."

In the Qur'an the expanse of Divine Compassion has been reiterated

﴿فَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُل رَّبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَٰسِعَةٍ﴾

If they belie thee (O, Our Apostle Muhammad) then say (thou) "thy Lord is full of Mercy all-embracing …" [1]

Now the question is: What is the mercy of God and what are the manifestations of Divine Compassion? On hearing the word 'compassion' the image of a person who is sympathetic, merciful and sentimental crosses our minds. We always compare everything with

1. Surah An'am, verse 147.

our selves and our sentiments, whereas, when we say 'God's compassion is far-reaching and embraces all things', or that 'His Compassion and Knowledge is inclusive of everything', it does not mean the compassion that you and I have. What is meant by Divine Compassion is that the entire universe is the manifestation of God's Compassion. The order of existence, both in the material as well as the non-material sphere, is all a manifestation of His Compassion. In the Komeil Supplication we say: «بِرحمَتِكَ الَّتی وَسِعَت کُلَّ شَیءٍ» meaning the compassion that has spread everywhere is in the form of existence and being. Thus the entire world of existence is God's Compassion; all that is present is His Compassion. In the Glorious Qur'an it is stated:

﴿وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِی یُنَزِّلُ ٱلۡغَیۡثَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا قَنَطُواْ وَیَنشُرُ رَحۡمَتَهُۥ﴾

"*He it is Who sendeth down the rain after they have despaired, and spreadeth His Mercy …*"[1]

As a result of rain the parched earth becomes green and alive. Therefore, a life, which has been born on earth is a natural and existential effect, and is called 'mercy' by the Qur'an. Now it makes no difference whether by rain is meant rainfall itself – which is a mercy and spreads everywhere – or is an effect that is derived from rainfall – which includes life and growth of flowers and vegetation. In any case, the Qur'an has designated the word 'mercy' to a natural phenomenon.

Thus, the entire universe and the order of existence is a manifestation of God's mercy. Every thing, every creature, and every human being is a mercy of Divine mercies. All of God's blessings are Divine mercies, including water, air, light, darkness, night, sunlight, the moon, the stars, the earth, flower, vegetation etc …just as stated in the Quran:

1. Surah Ash-Shu'ra, verse 28

﴿وَإِن تَعُدُّواْ نِعۡمَةَ ٱللَّهِ لَا تُحۡصُوهَآ﴾

Each and everything is a manifestation of God's Mercy. [1]

A few manifestations of All-embracing Mercy

If we look a bit closely at this world and our surroundings, we notice that sound, healthy and beneficial things and creatures prevail over unhealthy and useless things. There are a thousand times more healthy human beings than unhealthy ones. Disease, affliction and disaster are exceptional things. The foremost principle in the world of existence is based on Divine creatures and blessings being sound, healthy and free of affliction. They are all manifestations of the expanse and predominance of Divine mercy.

In the body of human beings and animals, God has created certain forces that, as far as possible, are able to get rid of diseases on their own. In fact, medicines and drugs strengthen those forces to fight the diseases better. By putting in plaster and taking other steps, the parts of a bone that fractures are placed next to each other and after a period of time the body heals the fracture. Thus, medicines and drugs strengthen the body's forces so that it can repair itself, and it is not the medication which joins the fractured bones together.

Yet another example to show the predominance of God's Favor and Mercy is that God has made certain creatures to get rid of impurities. Sea water, plants and vegetation purify the air; and were it not for this cleansing of the atmosphere and air, man could not remain alive. It means that after a period of time, the air would be saturated with carbon dioxide and man would not be able to breathe and would choke to death, and all creatures that need pure air would be wiped out. But God has created trees, plants and seas in order to constantly purify the atmosphere to facilitate breathing. We are unaware of all these bounties. These Divine bounties are present around us and are doing their job without us being mindful of them.

1. "If ye would count God's bounties, ye can not compute them …" (Surah An Nahl, verse 18.

Similarly, if you pay attention you will notice that man produces a large amount of waste matter and garbage. Human life produces a large amount of surplus materials and trash. The same applies to animals that produce waste matter, and after their death, their carcasses decompose. If these things remain in the same state on the earth, the planet would no longer be habitable. But, Almighty God has created tiny creatures which we call microbes, bacteria and so forth. Their job is to break down the waste and surplus matters and to get rid of them. If these creatures did not exist it would not be long before the world would be filled with garbage, and living creatures would not exist.

Thus, whichever part of the natural world a human being looks at; whether it is his own body, or the plant world; the animal world; the seas; the atmosphere, and so forth, he sees manifestations of Divine mercy, and admits that God's Mercy is expansive and predominant. Of course, cases such as disease, catastrophe, flood and earthquake occur sometimes, which, apart from being in the best interest, amount to zero and are nothing in comparison to the unlimited Divine bounties.

Yet another manifestation of Divine Mercy is the human soul of carnality (the Nafs) and spirit. Man is intrinsically chaste, devout and religious. Human nature seeks truth and justice as well as morality and virtues. God has created human nature in this manner – and this is one of the manifestations of God's mercy. Of course, the living environment, family, parents etc … cause human beings to change; but inherently and essentially, man being has been created of a sound and clean nature. The blessed verse of the Qur'an states:

﴿فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا ۚ فِطْرَتَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّتِى فَطَرَ ٱلنَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ﴾

"*Then set thou thy face uprightly for (the right) religion, in natural devotion to the truth (following) the nature initiated by God in which he hath made the people …*"[1]

According to the above verse, human nature has been established on religion, worship of God and monotheism. God has given us

1. Surah Ar-Room, verse 30.

intelligence, granted us a pure nature, and in addition, sent guides in order to guide us and show us the right path. All these are manifestations of Divine mercy.

Divine Remission is a Manifestation of All-Embracing Divine Mercy

Divine Remission is one of the manifestations of Divine Mercy which applies to human beings in the hereafter. But Divine Remission and Forgiveness mean removing the negative effects of sins from the soul of man because sin brings about certain effects which, in the other world, obliterate the symptoms of the disease and the bacteria.

Divine Remission and Forgiveness of sins is not like the amnesty of a criminal by a human ruler. If a person commits a crime and the person who should punish him waives his right and forgives his crime, there is no change in the person and psyche of the criminal. One can even say that worldly crimes do not have an effect on a person's psyche. It means that neither the crime itself nor it's retribution have an effect on the human psyche. However, there are a series of psychic effects with regard to disobedience of God's commandments and forgiveness of sins. It is not as though a person who commits a sin has only performed a deed and that's all; it is not as though a person who commits adultery has only violated a law. This alone is not the issue. When a person commits adultery, speaks untruths, slanders or consumes alcoholic beverages or commits murder or any other crime, it has certain effects on his soul and spirit.

Opposing God's commandments and disregarding His biddings and prohibitions, has a negative effect on a person's soul and distances him from the Divine Court. For this reason, it has been mentioned in narratives that on the Day of Resurrection a human being is resurrected with a face, which his carnal soul has assumed as a result of his deeds and it could be the face of a particular animal that he is resurrected with.

To the human soul, sin is like dirt on a clean sheet. We have in narratives that the heart of a man is like a white sheet of paper. When he commits the first sin, a black spot appears on this sheet. The black spot is in fact the consequence of that sin on the human soul. The next sin that he commits enlarges this spot and subsequent sins increase

the size of this spot so that it reaches to the point where the entire sheet of the human soul becomes black, dark and tenebrous. This is the effect of sin and disobedience of God.

Thus the question of sin is unlike committing a crime and violating human laws. If this person qualifies for Divine Mercy, it does not only mean that he has been waived and forgiven; rather, considering that 'Divine mercy' is one of the branches of the all-embracing Divine Compassion, he needs to wash the carnal soul and cleanse it of the negative effects of sin.

Repentance is one of the ways of Divine Remission. A revolution occurs in the soul of a person who regrets his deed, who pleads for forgiveness, connects to Him, sheds tears and repents. This inner revolution washes the carnal soul of contaminations. Asking forgiveness of Allah and going to the Threshold of the House of God and asking for Divine Remission creates a spiritual revolution. Thus according to narratives, if asking Allah for forgiveness is only verbal and not sincere from within, it is a mockery.

﴿رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ سَبِيلَكَ وَاتَّبَعُوا تَابُوا لِلَّذِينَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ﴾

"O, our Lord! Thou comprehendeth all things in (Thy) mercy and knowledge, therefore forgive Thou those who turn (unto thee) and follow Thy way, and save them from the torment of Hell." [1]

God's mercy forgives those who repent and follow His way and qualify for His mercy. Thus, Divine Remission is one of the manifestations of mercy that applies to those who repent.

The all-embracing Divine Mercy is such that it purifies souls, distanced from the Sacred Divine Realm due to sins. Just as the waters of the seas, and trees and plants, wash away the dirty air filled with obnoxious gases; and certain specific creatures consume the waste matters present on the earth and thereby clean the natural habitat, the soul of a human being needs to be washed by means of

1. Surah Al Ghafir, verse 7.

Divine Remission. Thus, it has been stated in some narratives that, "a person who offers his prayers five times a day is like one who bathes five times a day from a stream which flows in front of his house."

Repentance, obligatory prayers, and virtuous deeds are all instruments that clean the soul of turbidities so that a human being qualifies for Divine Remission.

Second preliminary: Order of Causes and Instruments

God's mercy has its own particular reasons and causes. If God wishes to purify the air, he has made the water of the seas, the trees and vegetation etc … as the means to do it. If He wishes to get rid of such and such disease, He does it through the medium of herbs or food or medication. If He wants the body of a human being to fight toxins, afflictions and germs so that he does not die, he has provided for certain forces inside the human body to do the job. This rule applies in relation to guidance of mankind as well. If God wishes to guide man, His guidance has its own specific order and system. It is not as though God makes a revelation to any person directly; rather, it has a unique system. He has appointed certain individuals as apostles and prophets.

Instruments of Divine Remission

Qualifying for Divine Remission in relation to God's bondmen has its own unique system and certain instruments have been determined for it. One of the instruments of Divine Remission is repentance for sins.

A good deed is one of the instruments of Divine Remission. Good and virtuous deeds and fulfilling one's divine duties is a means of Divine remission. In the glorious Qur'an, the Benevolent God states:

﴿إِنَّ ٱلۡحَسَنَٰتِ يُذۡهِبۡنَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ﴾

"…verily the good deeds take away the evil deeds …"[1]

Where is there mention of evil and ugly deeds eliminating or removing the good deeds? There is no such thing called 'an evil deed'

1. Surah Hud, verse 114.

that eliminates the good deed. The evil deed itself does not remain but its effect on the soul does. Darkness that sin creates in the soul of a man persists, while good deeds obliterate its effect.

Avoidance of cardinal sins is yet another instrument of obliteration of sins. Even if a person who has occasionally committed the minor sins and does not repent for committing them, his minor sins are eliminated on the condition that he has turned away from the cardinal ones. Of course, it is a cardinal sin itself if a person repeats the minor sin and persists on committing it, but a minor sin without repetition and without reaching to the level of a cardinal sin is eliminated because of avoidance of cardinal sins. The glorious Qur'an states thus on the subject:

﴿إِن تَجْتَنِبُواْ كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُم مُّدْخَلاً كَرِيمًا﴾

"If ye avoid the great sins which ye are forbidden, We will expiate from you (smaller) misdeeds, and We will admit you (to Paradise) an honorable (place of) entry (it is indeed)." [1]

Intercession is yet another instrument of Divine Remission. If a person has committed sins and not repented nor asked God for forgiveness; and his good deeds are not such as to obliterate his sinful deeds, he carries the weight of some of those sinful deeds with him to the next world. The all-embracing Divine Mercy necessitates that, yet again, he is able to qualify under certain conditions for Divine Remission. The manner in which this becomes possible is that he qualifies for Divine Remission through the medium of perfected souls such as apostles and saints (AS). However, it is clear that to qualify for Divine Remission by this method has its own particular arrangement, limits and conditions.

1. Surah An Nisa, verse 31.

Role of Intercession in qualifying for Divine Remission

Intercession implies that if all the conditions of intercession including having the aptitude and qualification for intercession are present in the person, the intercessor brings about certain changes in the person's carnal soul. As a result, the contamination of his carnal soul is washed away by those in possession of sainthood with Divine favor, in a manner that we are aware of. In this way, he is cleansed and purified of his sins like the washing of a dirty garment and he qualifies for Divine Remission.

Therefore, it is important to have the aptitude. Although Divine Remission is all-embracing and universal however, on the Day of Judgment it will apply to the person who has the merit to be cleansed. It is the same in this world as well. God's mercy is universal and rain is Divine mercy as well. However, a certain land has the aptitude and, after rainfall, it grows flowers and herbs while a certain land does not have this capability and is for instance a rubbish dump so that when rain falls over it, it increases the disgusting odor. It means Divine mercy is universal, but this particular land does not have the aptitude. On the Day of Judgment, Divine Remission can apply to everybody but it is also necessary for human beings to have the aptitude for it. Some individuals have the aptitude while some others do not. If all the conditions are met, with their possession of sainthood, the perfected souls wash the area pertaining to this human being's soul.

Of course, these perfected souls are intercessors and the emanation reaches from God. All affairs are in His Hands but God's emanation reaches to deserving individuals through these perfected souls. Some souls become like a worn-out garment, which has become so intensely filthy that it is even likely to tear during washing without becoming clean. In the same way the soul loses the capacity of qualifying for Divine Remission as well.

He who sins, senses the turbidity that it causes to his soul, and feels insecure and unclean. This is, in itself, a Divine blessing. Was it not for this feeling he would not think of repentance. When a person, who has committed a sin, notices that he has not repented; not recited a supplication; not wept; not attended a religious ceremony; not recited the Qur'an; is preoccupied with worldly affairs; is focused on his wife, children, money and position and even studies, he gets a turbid

and dirty feeling within him. When this person attends a supplication session, he recites the 'Komail Supplication' attentively; he recites the 'Iftitah Supplication'. At early dawn in the blessed month of Ramadhan, he recites at least a few passages of the 'Abu Hamzah Supplication' and sheds a tear or two; he senses that he has acquired purity of heart and a certain kind of spiritual radiance and wants to take-off for the ascension. This is the very change that has occurred in his soul. Tears and sincere worship have cleansed and enlightened him in the same way that soiled clothing becomes clean and tidy after washing. This feeling more or less occurs in every person and it shows that there is the possibility of improvement in a person. Change is acquired with intercession as well but this change takes place with regard to those persons that qualify and have the capacity for intercession by means of the apostles, saints and intercessors by the leave of God.

Distinctions of Right and Wrong Intercession

We now state the differences that are present between wrong and right intercession so that the reality of intercession shall become clearer. We, hereby, summarize the differences between these two types of intercession in the following instances:

1– Right intercession begins with God and ends with the sinner whereas wrong intercession is all that is customary in human societies; the intercession begins with the sinner and ends with either the ruler, or the person who has the authority to punish the criminal. In right intercession, God selects the means and the intercessor is under God's control. He steps on to the scene of intercession by His Will and makes the sinner liable for the all-embracing Divine Mercy.

2– However, in wrongful intercession the criminal chooses the intercessor and compels him to intercede so that the intercessor is in the criminal's control.

The Qur'an considers intercession to be the exclusive domain of God:

"Say thou (O' Our Apostle Muhammad): 'God's (alone) is intercession altogether …"

The above verse has devoted all intercessions exclusively to God. It is possible that the word 'altogether' refers to various types of legislative intercessions and intercession of Divine remission, and all causes and instruments of the all-embracing Divine mercy. It is also possible that it alludes to intercession on the Day of Judgment, and 'altogether' alludes to intercession by saints, apostles (SA), angels and pious believers etc … This is because on the Day of Resurrection the perfected souls are chosen by God and they do not intercede without His Leave and Will. The guilty do not have the power to appoint intercessors as confirmed by many of the Qur'an's verses:

١- ﴿مَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ﴾

"… for you there is none besides Him of a guardian, nor any intercessor …"[1]

٢- ﴿مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦ﴾

"Who is he that can intercede without His permission …"[2]

٣- ﴿يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا تَنفَعُ ٱلشَّفَـٰعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنُ﴾

"On that day intercession (of any) shall avail not save (that of) whom God hath permitted …"[3]

In some supplications we implore God to appoint the Infallible Imams (AS) as our intercessors, just as in the supplication, after the pilgrimage of Imam Reza's (AS) shrine, we recite:

«وَأبلغ أئِمَتِى سَلامِى وَدُعائِى وَشَفِّعهُم فِى جَمِيعِ ما سَئَلتُك»

"O' God! Convey my greetings of peace and supplication to my Imams; and establish them as intercessors with regard to the needs that I have expressed." [4]

On the Day of Judgment, it is God Who selects the intercessor. He chooses intercessors from among the perfected souls in order to communicate His Remission.

The idolaters imagined they could choose intercessors for themselves and considered their idols as intercessors. The Glorious Qur'an rejects this invalid conjecture and in numerous verses explicitly states that no creature has the right of intercession without His permission. He selects the intercessor, and no person can appoint an intercessor

1. Surah As Sajdah, verse 4.
2. Surah Al Baqarah, verse 255.
3. Surah Ta Ha, verse 109.
4. Bihar al-Anwaar, vol. 99, page 57.

between himself and God because all intercessions belong to Him alone:

1– In incorrect intercessions the authority to whom intercession is made on behalf of others comes under the influence of the intercessor. In this case a change occurs in the person's resolve with regard to implementation of the law, but no change is wrought in the sinner. In correct intercession, it is God Who makes an impact on the intercessor and brings him under His influence and Who chooses and induces him to intercede. As explained previously, the intercessor transforms the sinner and cleanses him of the effects of sin.

To sum up, human intercessions, normally, do not cause any change in the spiritual make-up and thinking of the sinner, and all changes pertain to the person who intercedes, whereas, in Divine intercessions and intercessions related to the hereafter, the sinner is totally transformed. It implies that the intercessor himself takes the sinner out of the undesirable situation and places him in an agreeable one.

2– In incorrect intercessions, any sinner and criminal can qualify for intercession. There are no specific conditions, whereas, it is not so in correct intercessions. Only under specific conditions, and not every criminal, qualifies for intercession.

3– Worldly intercessions are a form of discrimination in the law because the law is specially overlooked for the rich and well connected, and implemented only with regard to the poor and not well connected. However, after-worldly intercession is infinite Divine mercy that is applied by the perfected souls to individuals who qualify for spiritual purification. It is like a surgeon who performs surgery on the human body and removes the tumor so that the patient is definitely secure from its disagreeable consequences.

It is not because there is discrimination in the law that persons fail to qualify for intercession in the hereafter; rather, it is because they do not possess the merit for application of Divine mercy. It is they themselves who are to blame for not being able to earn the necessary intercession.

The first objection was that hope in intercession emboldens one to commit sin and any sinner, in the hope of intercession on the Day of

Judgment, will not have any cause to fear the consequences and retributions of sin and will feel free to commit it.

Firstly, in the Qur'an, God has promised Divine Remission to His creatures and has stated:

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"Verily God forgiveth not that (anything) be associated with Him, and forgiveth anything besides this to whomsoever He pleaseth…"[1]

If a polytheist repents for his polytheism, he benefits from the remission that God has promised to His creatures, even if they have not repented for their ordinary sins.

If, having hope in Divine Remission and forgiveness is like pinning hope on intercession, then, repentance and promise of its acceptance is likely to embolden the sinner to wrongdoing as well, and the person will be emboldened to commit sin in the hope that he will repent after committing it. Therefore, if belief in intercession emboldens a person to sin, belief in acceptance of repentance also emboldens a person to sin.

Secondly, resolving the issue, in two cases promise of intercession leads to audacity:

First: if a specific person or specific designation such as 'Ulema' (erudite scholars) or 'Saadaat' (descendants of the prophet's (SA) household) and similar titles are definitely, assuredly, and unconditionally given the promise of intercession with regard to one or several specific sins.

Second: a definite, unconditional promise of intercession is given concerning all sins, in relation to all retributions and in all stages of the hereafter on the Day of Judgment. However, if intercession is ambiguous and it is not clear which group will intercede, for which sinner, and what sin, at what moment, in which stage of the hereafter, under what conditions, and the definite promise of intercession is not given, then how does it embolden one to commit sin?

1. Surah An Nisa, verse 116.

No sinner can rest assured that God will grant the permission of intercession for him, and this uncertainty itself blocks the path of the sinner and prevents his audacity to act willfully. One of its conditions is the Lord's approval in relation to the individual who is to be interceded:

﴿وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ٱرْتَضَىٰ﴾

"…and they can not intercede but for him whom He approveth…"[1]

The time of occurrence of intercession is also, not known. The Day of Resurrection is equivalent to fifty thousand years and there are a large number of stages on this day. It is not clear at what stage intercession occurs. It might occur after a human being has negotiated all those stages and traversed all those difficult passes. If it is so then the sinner must bear years of punishment. As described, the Day of Resurrection is associated with various chastisements as well as the settlement of ones account. It will be so terribly difficult and not less in degree than the torment of Hell. Passing the bridge and being delivered from punishments on the Day of Judgment will be difficult, indeed. The glorious Qur'an describes that Day as follows:

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ ٱلسَّاعَةِ شَىْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝١ يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى ٱلنَّاسَ سُكَـٰرَىٰ وَمَا هُم بِسُكَـٰرَىٰ وَلَـٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ ٱللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ۝٢﴾

"O' ye people! Fear ye your Lord! Verily the quake of the Hour (of Doom) is a thing tremendous. On the day ye shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe; and every pregnant female shall drop her load, and thou shalt behold the people (as) intoxicated; But the wrath of God will be (so) terrible."[2]

1. Surah Al Anbiya, verse 28.
2. Surah Al Hajj, verses 1 and 2.

Apart from the Day of Resurrection, throughout the period in the intermediary world – *Barzakh,* not known how long it will last – a human being will struggle with his punishments, not less difficult than those of the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, with all of these uncertainties, no criminal can rest assured that he will qualify for intercession and have nothing beside 'hope in intercession'. Of course, hope is an extremely constructive factor as opposed to despair, which is the most destructive.

A person, who is pessimistic about his own future and thinks that no matter what, he is bound to suffer punishment in the fire of hell, will never think of reforming and repenting because he has despaired of being saved from the fire of hell. He assumes that it makes no difference if he commits more sins now, because he is bound to burn in the fire of hell until eternity and so why should he deprive himself of the pleasures of this world, and make it a burning hell as well.

If a person is optimistic and hopes to gain salvation, if he does not pollute himself too much with sins, and does not destroy the favorable groundwork he has prepared, there is the likelihood of his changing and being delivered from the negative aftermaths of misdeeds and of achieving happiness. He seeks to reform himself and to change his way of life no matter what, and thinks of returning to God's fold.

The second objection was how it was possible for the intercessor to influence God …

Intercession begins with God and is an attribute of Divine mercy that the sinner receives through the perfected souls and intermediaries of emanation. He incites intercession by the intercessor, so intercession begins with Him and ends with the wrongdoer, and does not begin with the intercessor influencing God.

This thinking is the result of comparing correct intercession to worldly intercessions, whereas, there is no claim of influencing God's resolve. God's mercy reaches the wrongdoer through the perfected souls (intercessor) and brings about a transformation in him.

The third objection was on discrimination in the law. The reply was given earlier.

The fourth objection was that if as a result of committing a sin the sinner deserves a specific punishment, waiving the punishment is a kind of injustice. How is it possible that an apostle or a saint beseeches God to waive punishment from a criminal, when this is unjust, and the apostles and saints never beseech God to be unjust?

However, an individual who qualifies for intercession does not remain in the same state he was in previously; rather, he changes, is cleansed and merits divine remission. It means the individual who was the subject for punishment is placed in the subject of Divine remission and mercy. Here, intercession has led to change of subject and.[1] " … *these are they who, God changeth (their) evil deeds into good ones …"*

Just as in the glorious Qur'an God states:

﴿يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ﴾

"Even so God doeth whatsoever He liketh"[2] *and :*

﴿يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ﴾

"God commandeth whatever He intendeth."[3]

It is evident that whatever God intends is based on wisdom and thus He converts a transgression into a virtuous deed and 'excommunicates' transgression. It is for this reason that God 'excommunicates' the lesser sins of those who avoid committing cardinal sins. Excommunication does not mean that a person who commits a lesser sin which has affected his soul should enter Paradise in the same state; rather, the sin is either erased or transformed into a good deed and thereafter, he is forgiven.

1. Surah Al Furqan, verse 70.
2. Surah Al-a-Imran, verse 40.
3. Surah Maidah, verse 1.

Conditions of Intercession

The conditions of intercession, acceptable to the intellect.

The mind says that considering that the nature of the Supreme One is infinite, God's mercy and remission is infinite and applies to all creatures. The mind understands that capability is necessary, as well. The person should qualify for God's mercy. However, it is the mind, which figures out what capability is necessary.

The same holds true for intercessions of the human kind. It is impossible for a person to intercede to appoint an illiterate person who cannot sign his name to a sensitive post, such as a department head or director-general position. This is because such a person essentially lacks the capability. Or, an individual is opposed to a ruler, has revolted against him and is in a state of war with him, so that it is impossible for a person to intercede for amnesty on behalf of that individual because such a person does not have the potential for intercession. His rebelliousnous does not change on being granted amnesty and thus, for the mind, the principle of capability is a necessary and indisputable principle.

A brief explanation as regards the attributes and factors which cause one to lose the capability and be deprived of divine intercession and those that are necessary, in order to qualify for intercession, have been given.

Faith

The foremost condition mentioned for intercession is faith. Therefore, faithlessness obstructs intercession. Denial of the essence of the Supreme One and polytheism; denial of the prophetic missions and denial of the Day of Judgment are three principal issues that lead to faithlessness. Denial of other affairs that become a denial of God or prophetic missions, and in general, anything that alludes to faithlessness causes retraction of a human being's qualifications for Divine intercession.

Faith is the opening of the window of a human being's heart towards the unseen world. However, faith has various stages. Sometimes in the heart of a person there is only a small hole that opens to the unseen world and a light, however dim, reflects on his heart. Sometimes this hole is a bit larger and thus his faith is stronger and the degree of his belief and conviction a little higher. Sometimes, the heart of a person is fully open to the unseen world and he reaches the stage of conviction. A person such as the Commander of the Believers, Imam Ali (AS), had reached the stage where he states:

«لَو كُشِفَ الغِطاءُ مَا ازدَدتُ يَقِيناً»

"If the curtains of the unseen are set aside and everything becomes evident, it would add nothing to my conviction."[1]

This stage belongs to the Prophet of Allah (SA) and his pure and chaste progeny (AS), the saints of God, and exclusively to the Commander of the Believers (AS). There are certain individuals in the subsequent stages whose rankings differ. Similarly, with regard to weakness of faith, there are different degrees until it finally reaches a degree where the heart gets sealed and no hole is open to the world of the unseen. It is obvious that such a person does not have the capability to receive divine intercession like a sealed container, which even it reaches the bottom of the sea, not a drop of water gets inside it. Divine mercy and remission apply only to the person who has his heart open towards God, His attributes, to the unseen world and to Divine remission and mercy.

The Qur'an proves the necessity of faith on the issue of intercession:

١- ﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَمَن يُشۡرِكۡ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلَۢا بَعِيدًا﴾

"Verily God forgiveth not that (anything) be associated with Him, and forgiveth anything besides this to whomsoever He pleaseth; and

1. Bihar al-Anwaar, vol. 69, page 209.

whoso associateth (aught) with God, hath indeed strayed far, far away (from the right path).”[1]

This verse proves that God’s remission does not apply to a person who ascribes partners to God and is a polytheist. Polytheism is of various types including: polytheism in essence. At times a person believes in several deities and believes that there is both a God of good as well as a God of evil. At times, he believes in polytheism in ‘sovereignty of God’, and believes the governance of the universe to be in the hands of different ‘lords’ or ‘different masters’. Occasionally he practices polytheism in worship as well – just as we mentioned earlier on – and it originates from polytheism in sovereignty of God and governance of affairs. All types of polytheism are condemned that deny the unity of the Ultimate Reality and lead to retraction of capability from man.

However, some degrees of polytheism do not lead to disbelief in the unity of the Ultimate Reality, and often a Muslim individual suffers from certain degrees of ‘latent polytheism’, and he is not aware of it himself, just as it has been quoted from this narrative from the Messenger of God (SA):

“Polytheism (and its finding its way in the human being) is more camouflaged than the walking of an ant on a black stone in the dark of the night.”[2]

Sometimes, a Muslim follows his vain desires, which is itself a form of latent polytheism. In admonishment of such persons, the glorious Qur’an states:

﴿أَفَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ ٱتَّخَذَ إِلَـٰهَهُۥ هَوَىٰهُ﴾

“Hast thou then seen him who taketh as his god his vain desires…”[3]

In this sense a large number of individuals are polytheists because they have installed their vain desires as deities. Of course, they do not

1. Surah An Nisa, verse 116.
2. Bihar Al Anwaar, vol. 69, page 93.
3. Surah Al Jathiya, verse 23.

practice polytheism in worship; they are not polytheists in their belief of creative power and … but they worship their vain desires.

At times, persons take into consideration the material causes and pay no attention to the Cause of all causes. However, these people suffer from polytheism in practice and believe their daily sustenance and provision lies in the hands of their employers and bosses. Due to negligence, such persons consider their providers of sustenance to be their masters, but if you ask them about their belief, they soon realize who their true Provider of Sustenance is, and will admit their mistaken belief.

Thus, due to negligence a human being suffers from hidden polytheism – and would be among the saints of God if he does not have these deficiencies. Imam Sajjad (the Fourth Shiite Imam – AS) stated:

«ما رَأَئيتَ شيئاً إلاَّ و رَأَيتُ الله قَبلَهُ وَ بَعدَه.»

"I saw not a thing except that I saw God before, after, and along with it." [1]

These supreme stages and degrees are not relevant to us. In any case, latent polytheism does neither lead to disbelief in the unity of the ultimate Reality nor deprive a person of intercession and Divine Remission, even though the term 'polytheism' is applied to it. If a person does not suffer from polytheism in worship and polytheism in belief, he is not a disbeliever in the unity of the ultimate Reality and is a monotheist.

٢- ﴿يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَنَسُوقُ ٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا ﴿٨٦﴾ لَّا يَمْلِكُونَ ٱلشَّفَـٰعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱتَّخَذَ عِندَ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٨٧﴾﴾

"On the day (of Resurrection) We will gather the pious ones unto the Beneficent (God) like the guests of honor But We will drive the guilty ones unto Hell like (the thirsty) herd (to the watering place)**

1. Alalma'atah Al Beidha, page 169.

They shall own not any intercession, save he who hath taken a promise from the Beneficent (God to do so).”[1]

This verse considers the guilty as being deprived of intercession. The term ‘guilty’ is a general one and could at times be a disbeliever and at times a believer. In the same way that a disbeliever commits a sin, consumes alcoholic drinks, commits adultery etc … the believer, at times, commits those sins as well. Initially, it states that the guilty do not own any intercession and thereafter, it makes an exception of a group of them, “save he who hath taken a promise from the Beneficent God.” What does the word ‘promise’ mean? ‘Promise’ implies faith because Surah ‘Yasin’ mentions this promise, stating:

﴿أَلَمۡ أَعۡهَدۡ إِلَيۡكُمۡ يَٰبَنِيٓ ءَادَمَ أَن لَّا تَعۡبُدُواْ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنَۖ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمۡ عَدُوّٞ مُّبِينٞ ٦٠ وَأَنِ ٱعۡبُدُونِيۚ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٞ مُّسۡتَقِيمٞ ٦١﴾

“Enjoined I not on you O’ children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan? For, he is your open enemy. And ye should worship (only) Me (and) this is the (only) Right way.”[2]

One who has a covenant with God, has faith; while the person who is faithless has severed his ties with God and trampled upon his covenant. Thus, initially, it states: “all the guilty ones enter Hell in a state of being thirsty”. Thereafter, it states that it is possible that they qualify for intercession if they are believers, whereas, the disbelievers among the guilty, will be deprived of it.

Being a believer is a necessary condition for intercession but it is not evident that it is sufficient, because very often he does not meet the other conditions. However, a believer thinks it likely that intercession would apply to him if God wills.

1. Surah Maryam, verses 85 to 87.
2. Surah Yasin, verses 60 & 61.

﴿وَنَادَىٰٓ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ أَصۡحَٰبَ ٱلۡجَنَّةِ أَنۡ أَفِيضُواْ عَلَيۡنَا مِنَ ٱلۡمَآءِ أَوۡ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ ٱللَّهُۚ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ٥٠ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُواْ دِينَهُمۡ لَهۡوٗا وَلَعِبٗا وَغَرَّتۡهُمُ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَاۚ فَٱلۡيَوۡمَ نَنسَىٰهُمۡ كَمَا نَسُواْ لِقَآءَ يَوۡمِهِمۡ هَٰذَا وَمَا كَانُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا يَجۡحَدُونَ ٥١﴾

"And shall call the inmates of (Hell) fire unto the inmates of the Garden (of bliss) saying: "Pour on us of the water or of what God hath provided you with; They shall say: 'Verily God hath forbidden both to the infidels. The people made their religion a pastime and sport and the life of the world deceived them. So today, We neglect them as they did neglect this day of theirs, and as they did deny Our signs." [1]

After the above verses concerning the disbelievers and their deprivation of Divine bounties on the Day of Resurrection, the Qur'an states:

﴿وَلَقَدۡ جِئۡنَٰهُم بِكِتَٰبٖ فَصَّلۡنَٰهُ عَلَىٰ عِلۡمٍ هُدٗى وَرَحۡمَةٗ لِّقَوۡمٖ يُؤۡمِنُونَ ٥٢ هَلۡ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأۡوِيلَهُۥۚ يَوۡمَ يَأۡتِي تَأۡوِيلُهُۥ يَقُولُ ٱلَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِن قَبۡلُ قَدۡ جَآءَتۡ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِٱلۡحَقِّ فَهَل لَّنَا مِن شُفَعَآءَ فَيَشۡفَعُواْ لَنَآ أَوۡ نُرَدُّ فَنَعۡمَلَ غَيۡرَ ٱلَّذِي كُنَّا نَعۡمَلُۚ قَدۡ خَسِرُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمۡ وَضَلَّ عَنۡهُم مَّا كَانُواْ يَفۡتَرُونَ ٥٣﴾

"And indeed We have brought unto them a Book, which We have explained with knowledge, guidance and mercy, for people who believe. Do they wait for anything but the final fulfillment (the resurrection)? On the day the final fulfillment cometh, those who neglected it before will say: 'Indeed, the apostles of Our Lord came with the truth. Are there for us (now) any intercessors that they may

1. Surah Al A'raf, verses 50 & 51.

intercede for us? Or could we be sent back so that we might act other than how we acted?' Indeed they have lost their souls, and what they forged hath gone away from them." [1]

What the Book implies here is the sending of apostles communicating the religions and guidance on behalf of God to man. A specific scripture was propounded for every period, such as the Torah, the Bible and the Qur'an. The day on which the source of these books become evident, those that consigned the Book and the religion to memory in the world, will come to their senses and regret their mistake, saying: "We wish there was an intercessor who would intercede for us, or that, we could go back to the world and perform good deeds."

The Qur'an states that such an expectation is impossible, as they themselves were responsible for the harm they did to their own souls. Thus, this verse rejects the idea of an intercessor for such individuals.

2– Yet another verse in Surah 'Ash Shu'ara (the Poets) mentions that, based on the confessions of the infidels and polytheists themselves, any kind of intercession on their behalf is rejected stating:

﴿وَبُرِّزَتِ ٱلْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ هَلْ يَنصُرُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَنتَصِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَكُبْكِبُواْ فِيهَا هُمْ وَٱلْغَاوُۥنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَجُنُودُ إِبْلِيسَ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالُواْ وَهُمْ فِيهَا يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ تَٱللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ إِذْ نُسَوِّيكُم بِرَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَمَآ أَضَلَّنَآ إِلَّا ٱلْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَٰفِعِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾﴾

"And Hell shall lay open for those who go astray; and it shall be said unto them: 'Where are those whom ye used to worship, besides God; can they help you or help themselves?' So they shall be thrown down into it, and those gone astray, and the hosts of the Ibliss (Satan), all

1. Surah Al A'raf, verses 52 & 53.

together. They shall say, while they wrangle therein among themselves, 'By God! We were in plain error, when we equaled you with the Lord of the worlds, and none beguiled us but the guilty ones. Now we have no intercessors, nor any loving friend. And if there be for us a return, we would be of the believers,'" [1]

These verses refer to those that worshipped other than God and who wrangle in Hell with their false deities that they worshipped in the world. These 'deities' were either human beings such as the pharaohs etc … or other creatures that were worshipped as God. Therein, the disbelievers realize their denial of the unity of the Ultimate Reality as well as their polytheism, but they again try to pin the blame on others and utter: "*the guilty led us astray*", and finally admit that "*here we neither have an intercessor nor a compassionate friend to help us and save us from torment.*"

٣- ﴿وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتَّىٰٓ أَتَىٰنَا ٱلْيَقِينُ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَٰعَةُ ٱلشَّٰفِعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾

"*And we used to belie the Day of Judgment! Till came upon us the Certainty (death)! So, shall avail them not the intercession of the intercessors!*"[2]

In this verse the infidels and disbelievers mention the reason for their entry into Hell. Among the reasons they cite:

"*We belied the Day of Judgment until it became a certainty to us.*"

In this verse, certainty implies either 'death' or the 'world after death' (the afterlife) that leads to certainty. However, it is possible that it implies certainty itself that comes upon entering the other world.

In any case, after mentioning the utterances of the disbelievers it states ﴿شَفَٰعَةُ ٱلشَّٰفِعِينَ﴾ "the intercession of the intercessors" is of no avail to them as they do not have the qualifications for it to be useful.

1. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, verses 91 to 101.
2. Surah Muddassir, verse 46 to 48.

Thus this verse clearly explains that intercession does not remedy the situation of the disbelievers.

Finally, the essential condition of intercession is the existence of a spiritual relationship with God. If he does not have the potential to be transformed into a pure human being, then certainly his plea for assistance will be of no benefit to him.

A few narratives on this subject

Sheikh Sadouq has narrated:

«عَن الحسن بن علیّ بن أبی طالب (علیهما السلام) فی حَدیثٍ طَویل قالَ: جاءَ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الیَهودِ آصحاب الکَبائِر، ما خَلا آهلُ الشّرك وَالظُّلم.»

A lengthy ‘Hadith’ narrated from Imam Hassan Mujtaba (AS) states: “A group of Jews came to meet the Apostle of God (SA), and the most learned of them asked certain questions …and the Prophet of Islam (SA) stated, “My intercession avails those who have committed cardinal sins, but does not avail those who engage in polytheism and oppression.”[1]

The Quran also states:

﴿إِن تَجْتَنِبُواْ كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ﴾

“If ye avoid the great sins which ye are forbidden, We will expiate from you (smaller) misdeeds …” [2]

Intercession is for those who have committed cardinal sins. Of course, the Messenger of Islam (SA) does not state precisely what cardinal sins and committed by what persons; rather he says succinctly “possessors of cardinal sins;” but it is not clear in what manner and how, and this has been kept ambiguous, so that a human being remains in a state between fear and hope.

1. Khisal, 355.
2. Surah An Nisa, verse 31.

This narrative makes an exception with regard to two groups of people namely, "the polytheists and the unjust oppressors". These two groups are deprived of intercession. We shall discuss 'oppression', which is independently an obstacle to intercession.

Another narrative from the Honorable Prophet of Islam (SA) states:

«فَهِیَ [شفاعَتی] نائِلَةٌ إنشاءَ اللهُ مَن ماتَ لا یُشرِكُ بِاللهِ شَیئاً»

"My intercession – if God wills – will benefit a person who, till the moment of death, has not the least bit engaged in associating partners with God." [1]

Here, the Prophet of God (SA) himself states: "if God wills", which means only by God's leave.

In yet another narrated tradition, the Prophet of God (SA) states:

«شَفاعَتی لِمَن شهد أن لا اِلهَ إلاّ الله مُخلِصاً یُصَدِّقُ قَلبه لسانُه،وَ لِسانُه قَلبَه.»

"My intercession applies to the person who bears witness to monotheism with sincerity of heart and his heart testifies for his statement and his statement testifies for his heart."[2]

Therefore, polytheism, denial of the unity of the Ultimate Reality, and not believing in God, the Apostle (SA) and the Day of Judgment prevents intercession because it takes away the capability from a person. Thus, believing in God, the prophetic mission and Day of Judgment is the foremost condition for qualifying for intercession.

Recognizing the People of the Right and the People of the Left

Yet another verse that we are to examine here is the one in the *Surah "Al Muddassir"*. It states:

﴿كُلُّ نَفۡسِۭ بِمَا كَسَبَتۡ رَهِينَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِلَّآ أَصۡحَٰبَ ٱلۡيَمِينِ ﴿٣٩﴾﴾

1. Masnad, Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 2, page 426.
2. Masnad, Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 2, pages 307 and 518.

"Every soul for what it earned, is held in pledge! Save the people of the Right Hand."[1]

The verse is an extremely cautioning verse. The soul of a person is hostage to his own deeds. He is the collateral and security deposit himself. On the Day of Resurrection also, all people are hostage to their deeds; all are collaterals. It means that each person has kept himself as collateral vis-à-vis the deeds he has performed and all that he has earned. However, the People of the Right Hand' are not collaterals for their deeds; they are released quickly. In *Surah 'Al-Inshiqaq'* this issue is mentioned thus:

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِيَمِينِهِۦ ۝٧ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ۝٨ وَيَنقَلِبُ إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهِۦ مَسْرُورًا ۝٩﴾

"And he who is given his Book in his right hand. Soon shall he be reckoned (with) an easy reckoning, and he shall return unto his people delighted."[2]

Of course the Glorious Qur'an has spoken concerning the People of the Right Hand in *Surah 'Al-Waqi'ah'* as well:

﴿وَأَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْيَمِينِ مَآ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْيَمِينِ ۝٢٧ فِى سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ ۝٢٨ وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ ۝٢٩﴾

*"And the people of Right Hand, Oh! What (a happy state shall) the people of the Right Hand (be in)! * Amid thorn-less lote-trees, * And banana-trees (with fruit) piled one above another."*[3]

Opposite the people of the Right Hand are the people of the Left Hand, concerning whom it states:

1. Surah Al Muddassir, verses 38 & 39.
2. Surah Al Inshiqaq, verses 7 to 9.
3. Surah Al Waqi'ah, verses 27 to 29.

﴿وَأَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلشِّمَالِ مَآ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾ فِي سَمُومٖ وَحَمِيمٖ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَظِلّٖ مِّن يَحۡمُومٖ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾

*"And the people of the Left Hand, Ah! What (a wretched state shall) the people of the Left Hand (be in)! * In scorching wind and scalding water, * And in the shadow of a black smoke."*[1]

In *Surahs 'Al Muddassir'* and *'Al Inshiqaq'*, it is clearly stated that the people of the Right Hand are those, whose Book of Deeds is presented to them in their right hand. Their deeds are easy to account for, and quickly calculated; who do not have to wait too long; who are not held as collateral for their deeds and are released quickly, whereas, others are all hostage to their deeds. We have attained salvation if we are of the people of the Right Hand, otherwise, we will suffer. The aforesaid verse continues:

﴿فِي جَنَّٰتٖ يَتَسَآءَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَنِ ٱلۡمُجۡرِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا سَلَكَكُمۡ فِي سَقَرَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُواْ لَمۡ نَكُ مِنَ ٱلۡمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمۡ نَكُ نُطۡعِمُ ٱلۡمِسۡكِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ ٱلۡخَآئِضِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوۡمِ ٱلدِّينِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتَّىٰٓ أَتَىٰنَا ٱلۡيَقِينُ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمۡ شَفَٰعَةُ ٱلشَّٰفِعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾

"In gardens shall they be, asking each other about the guilty ones, 'What hath brought you unto Hell?' They shall say: 'We were not of those who offered the regular prayers (to God);' and we used not to feed the poor; and we used to talk vainly with the vain talkers, and we used to belie the Day of Judgment, till came upon us the Certainty (death)!' So shall avail them not the intercession of the intercessors!"[2]

1. Surah Al Waqi'ah, verses 41 to 43.
2. Surah Al Muddassir, verses 40 to 48.

The aforesaid verses narrate the conversation of the dwellers of Paradise with the dwellers of Hell and it becomes quite evident that the dwellers of Paradise have authority over the dwellers of Hell. Thus, they question them as to why they were thrown into Hell, and in reply, they mention four ugly attributes as the reasons for their entry into Hell.

First, because they did not offer regular prayers (to God). The next, that they would neither help the poor nor feed them. Although the word «نُطعِمُ» used in the verse implies feeding, but it is clear that the issue is not solely feeding; rather it includes clothing, and shelter. This is because there are various types of poor people; some require to be fed; some require clothing and some others require housing, etc. In any case, they say that, "we used not to feed the poor."

The third attribute was "and we used to talk vainly with the vain talkers. The word «نخوض» means to sink, normally used with regard to wrongful affairs and interpreted as 'sinking into evil'. This verse has been interpreted in several ways; one is that the dwellers of Hell confess that they would ridicule the Day of Judgment and Paradise and Hell and speak mockingly about these affairs.

Another of its connotations is that they say, 'We were totally engrossed in the world and its glitters". The attitude of some people towards the world is such that their entire efforts are devoted to the life of the world.

The fourth characteristic feature of the dwellers of Hell is that they denied the Day of Judgment and Resurrection and had been adamant in their belief till the certainty of death had come to pass. "Certainty" is either due to the fact that everybody is certain that death is awaiting them, or it is because a human being attains certainty after death. If he had doubts about the intermediary world, the world after death and resurrection, about God and the Apostle (SA) and the rest of the universe's realities, once his soul is released from the prison of his body, he awakens to the truth. At that instant, he sees the realities and becomes certain that everything said was right. Thus death has been interpreted as 'certainty', although the second interpretation seems to be the more appropriate one.

In any case, they confess that till the moment of death, they possessed these ugly attributes. It is then that God states: "So, shall they not avail the intercession of the intercessors."

Allameh Tabatabaie's commentary on the above verse

In the Surah 'Al-Baqarah', the late Allameh Tabatabaie has put forward a discussion with the heading "Intercession applies to what persons?"[1] In the course of this discussion, he has dealt with this verse, thus:

"From the proofs that are present in *Surah 'Al-Muddassir'* , the daily mandatory prayers and 'Zakat' alms tax had not been legislated in the manner that they are performed today. Thus the term «صلاة» does not imply the daily obligatory prayer that has been legislated in Islam; rather it implies any type of humble meditation and worship of God. Also, feeding the poor means "maximum expenditure on the needy" in the Cause of Allah. In this manner the blessed verse should imply that they (the dwellers of hell) were heedless of God and did not worship Him. They did not feed and spend money in the Cause of God. Mesmerized by the world and its allurements, they ridiculed verses concerning the Day of Judgment and accountability and belied resurrection.

Undoubtedly, when they did not believe in God, they did not believe in the prophetic mission as well, because the prophetic mission is a branch of belief in God. Their lack of belief in God is understood from the verse, «لَم نَكُ مِنَ آلمُصَلّينَ»("We were not of those who offered the regular prayers) because we interpret this verse to mean "We were not submissive in relation to the Truth". Similarly, a person who has no faith in God and the Day of Judgment is certainly among those who are absorbed by the life of the world and are not concerned about the poor, the helpless and the destitute.

He states: "If we look closely at these four characteristics attributed to the guilty followed by, "So, shall avail them not the intercession of the intercessors", we observe that it is in stark contrast with the four main pillars of religion. They are: submissiveness to God, belief in

1. Tafseer Al Mizaan, vol. 1, page 169.

the Day of Judgment, charity to the poor and destitute, and not being preoccupied with the life of the world. Submission to God both from sincere belief as well as in practice makes a person perform all his religious obligations. The requisite of this submission is that he acknowledge the prophetic mission, because the Messenger is sent by God and practical submission necessitates carrying out the instructions of the Apostle - and this is the most fundamental pillar of religion.

The prophets (SA) came in order to draw people's attention to God and the Day of Judgment and thereafter, to guide them towards good and virtuous deeds so that people perform their religious duties in the life of this world. These beliefs necessitate that the person gives in charity to God's creatures and to the needy and not to be totally absorbed with the life of the world.

He states: "These verses have placed the people of the Right Hand and the guilty opposite one another and from this arrangement it is understood that the people of the Right Hand do not possess the four characteristics that are present in the guilty and the dwellers of Hell. They observe the right of Allah and the right of mankind."

Next he states: "Based on the fact that the guilty are denied intercession due to possessing four attributes, the people of the Right Hand who possess four attributes contrary to them qualify for intercession of the intercessors."

Of course, there are two groups of people of the Right Hand: one group are those that are not in need of intercession while the second group comprises of those who do need intercession. They have not committed any grave sin, or have repented if they have committed a grave sin, and their abstaining from grave sins has resulted in erasure of their lesser sins. They are released without intercession and thus, dwell in gardens filled with bounties, The other group that have committed grave sins and have not repented are released, provided they qualify for intercession of the intercessors. Thus, he concludes that one of the conditions of intercession is that the person should be among the people of the Right Hand.

In the *Nahj al-Balaghah,* regular prayer means:

«تَعاهَدُوا أمرَ الصَّلاةِ وَ حافِظُوا عَلَيهَا وَاستَكثِرُوا مِنها وَتَقَرَّبُوا بِها، فَإنَّهَا كانَت عَلَى المُئومِنينَ كَتاباً مَوقُوتاً. آلا تَسمَعُونَ اِلى جَوابِ أهلِ النَّارِ حينَ سُئِلُو ا: "ما سَلَكَكُم فى سَقَرَ قالوُالَم نَكُ مِنَ المُصَلِّينَ"»

"Show gratitude for the regular prayer and safeguard it well and perform it a great deal; and seek proximity to God by means of it, because regular prayer has been made obligatory for the believers and the time for performing it has been determined as well. Have you not heard that when the dwellers of Hell are queried "What issue caused you to be sent to Hell? They will say: "We were not of those who offered regular prayers!"[1]

A similar discussion has been mentioned concerning the term and word 'belief'. Till the time that the Apostle of Islam (SA) had not formally announced the issue of the Commander of the Believers' (AS) succession, 'belief' consisted of faith in God and the prophetic mission of the Messenger of God (SA) as well as the instructions that his Holiness proclaimed and communicated, and the belief in resurrection and the Day of Judgment. A person was not reckoned a believer if he did not believe in them or some of them. Of course, His Holiness, on numerous occasions, had reminded people of the succession of the Commander of the Believers (AS), but after the 'Ghadir-e-Khom' event when his Holiness formally, and in the presence of all people, introduced Imam Ali (AS) as his successor and guardian, the term 'belief' found another meaning to it. From then on, a 'believer' was any person who in addition to faith in God, the prophetic mission of Muhammad (SA) and Day of Judgment, acknowledged the immediate succession of the Commander of the Believers Imam Ali (AS) as well, and he was not a complete believer if he did not acknowledge it. This is because he had not believed in some of the Messenger's decrees even though he believed in some of the other instructions and commandments of the Messenger of Islam (SA). He cannot be a believer for the very fact that he does not believe in some of the decrees of the Apostle of Islam (SA) – upon

1. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sobhi- Saleh, sermon no. 199.

which, according to the testimony of the blessed verse,[1] the perfection of religion is based. In the early days of Islam it was incumbent to believe in the Messenger of Islam (SA) and after that, the succession of Imam Ali (AS).

The day this verse of *Surah Al Muddassir* was revealed, "We were not of those who offered regular prayer", it implied that they were not submissive in the face of the Truth and did not worship God; and after the regular daily prayers were mandated, this verse remained in force. This is because regular prayer is the same as 'submissiveness' that is attained while performing the regular prayer and the worshipper while being sincerely submissive carries out a particular command as well. Thus it becomes evident that a person who does not recite the regular prayers is not submissive in relation to the Exalted Truth and His commandment and thus Imam Ali (AS) uses this verse in order to emphasize regular prayer. Those, who do not recite the regular prayers, "So, shall avail them not the intercession of the intercessors."

The question arises: What about the person who has some of the four attributes of the guilty, but not all of them? Will he still be deprived of intercession?

Here, late Allameh Tabatabaie states: «مَا سَلَكَكُم فِی سَقَر» "What hath brought you unto the hell?" is posed to all the guilty ones. It is as if you visit a prison and see a number of inmates and wish to know for what reason they have been imprisoned. On one occasion you might ask each one of them separately what put him in jail. Each of them mentions his own particular crime. But if you ask all of them the question collectively, and one of them answers on behalf of all, he might say that they had taken alcoholic drinks, committed theft, adultery, murder, etc. This does not imply that every one of them had committed all the mentioned crimes, but, that some of them had committed murder, some adultery, etc. In this blessed verse also, it is a general question and it is posed to all the dwellers of hell. In response, they cite the four attributes as being the reason for their entry into hell. This reply implies that some of them did not offer

1. Surah Al-Maidah, verse 3.

regular prayers some used to talk vainly with the vain talkers, etc, If this is the case then one must say that each one of these sins *alone* can cause a person to be deprived of intercession.

His interpretation is corroborated by a famous narrative. It is from Umm Hamidah, the wife of Imam Sadiq (AS) and is in most books of narration. She asserts that His Holiness gathered the entire family and kith and kin at his bedside just before leaving this world, and stated:

«إنَّ شَفاعَتَنا لا تَنال مُستَخِفّاً بِالصَّلاةِ»

"Our intercession does not apply do those who take their regular prayers lightly."[1]

This narrative confirms that the downgrading for not offering regular prayers alone causes one to be deprived of intercession, which is consistent with Allameh Tabtabaie's interpretation of the verse.

Another narrative says that a person who does not offer regular prayers is a disbeliever.[2] A person who does not offer regular prayers is a person who has severed his communications with God. What sort of a believer is he who is not ready to spend even a few minutes out of twenty-four hours to go to the Court of God and, at least, move his tongue to speak. This person is very much like the person who has shut off all the doors of his heart and has no way to the unseen. He neither prostrates, nor raises his hand in imploration and "So, shall avail them not the intercession of the intercessors."

People of the Left Hand refer to those persons whose book of Deeds is handed to them in their left hand on the Day of Resurrection. They dwell amidst burning fires, boiling water and black smoke. These groups are placed in circumstances quite the opposite of the people of the Right Hand. However, the question is: why did they suffer such an evil fate? The glorious Qur'an responds to this question stating:

1. Bihar Al-Anwaar, vol. 2, page 47.
2. Comprehensive Shiite Narrated Traditions, vol. 4, page 74.

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ قَبْلَ ذَٰلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكَانُوا۟ يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى ٱلْحِنثِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَانُوا۟ يَقُولُونَ أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَٰمًا أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾﴾

*"Verily they were ere that, of the extravagant (in ease and luxury). * And they used to persist in sin heinous, * And they used to say: 'What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we even then indeed be again raised up?"*[1]

The above verse states that they were of the extravagant people. An extravagant person is one who is saturated with God's blessings but is neglectful of God. He persists on his heinous sins. A breach of covenant is an extremely heinous sin. What is this covenant? This is the very covenant that God has taken from every human being and has established his primordial nature on theology and monotheism. These people violate that primordial nature and covenant and even deny the Return Journey and resurrection.

As you can observe here, three unpleasant attributes have been mentioned for the people of the Left Hand and they are the same characteristics that the guilty would admit to having when replying to the query of people of the Right Hand. One of these attributes is that "verily they were ere that, of the extravagant in ease and luxury." This verse implies the words of the guilty who would say: "And we used to talk vainly with the vain talkers." Thus, both of them were saturated in worldly endowments; they were swamped in Divine blessings and were neglectful of God.

Yet another of their attributes is that they 'would persist in sin heinous' meaning that they persisted in violating their covenant with God by acting contrary to their own primordial nature and deviating from the path of monotheism. Thus in both cases, the opposite of people of the Right Hand are those who act contrary to their primordial nature of theology and monotheism.

Another attribute mentioned in *Surah 'Al-Waqi'ah',* is that the people of the Left Hand say:

1. Surah Al-Waqi'ah, verses 45 to 47.

﴿وَكَانُواْ يَقُولُونَ أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَٰمًا أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ﴾

"When we die and become dust and bones, shall we, indeed, be again raised up?"

The guilty say:

﴿وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ﴾

"And we used to belie the Day of Judgment."

In both instances they are presented as denying resurrection.

This perfect resemblance between the characteristics of the 'guilty' in *Surah 'Al-Muddassir'* and characteristics of 'people of the Left hand' in *Surah 'Al-Waqi'ah'*, reveals that these two are in fact, one and the same. The guilty in hell are the same people of the Left Hand and vice versa.

The reason for naming these two groups as 'people of the Right Hand and 'people of the Left hand

What was the reason for naming these two groups as 'people of the Right Hand and 'people of the Left hand?

We can find the answer to this question by referring to the verses of the Qur'an. The Glorious God has, on three occasions stated that on the Day of Resurrection, the Book of Deeds of a number of people will be handed to them in their right hand while the Book of Deeds of another group will be handed to them in their left hand. The Glorious Qur'an has named the former group as people of the Right Hand (اصحاب يمين) and the latter group as people of the Left hand (اصحاب شمال). Once, it is in *Surah 'Al-Haqqah'*, which states:

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِىَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِيَمِينِهِۦ فَيَقُولُ هَآؤُمُ ٱقْرَءُواْ كِتَٰبِيَهْ ۝١٩ إِنِّى ظَنَنتُ أَنِّى مُلَٰقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ ۝٢٠ فَهُوَ فِى عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ۝٢١ فِى جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ۝٢٢ قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ۝٢٣ كُلُواْ وَٱشْرَبُواْ هَنِيٓـًٔا بِمَآ أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِى ٱلْأَيَّامِ ٱلْخَالِيَةِ ۝٢٤﴾

*"Then he, who is given the (Record) Book (of his deeds) in his right hand, will say: 'Lo! Read ye my book! * Verily, I did feel that I shall meet my account. * So, shall he be in a life (of bliss), pleased (with it), * In the Garden Exalted, * The fruits of it being low and near at hand. * (it will be said unto them): 'Eat ye and drink ye for health and pleasure, for what goodness ye sent before you, in the days past.'"*[1]

Those who shall receive their Book of Deeds in their left hand are the people of the Left Hand. They have been described in the following terms:

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِشِمَالِهِۦ فَيَقُولُ يَٰلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَٰبِيَهْ ۝٢٥ وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ ۝٢٦ يَٰلَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ ٱلْقَاضِيَةَ ۝٢٧ مَآ أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَهْ ۝٢٨ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَٰنِيَهْ ۝٢٩ خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ۝٣٠ ثُمَّ ٱلْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ۝٣١ ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَٱسْلُكُوهُ ۝٣٢﴾

*"But he, who is given the (Record) Book (of deeds) in his left hand, will say: 'O' that the Book had not been given me! * And I had not known what my account was, * O' would that it had made an end (of me)! * Availed me not my wealth! * And hath gone from me (all) my power!'* (It will be said unto him): 'Seize him ye (angels)! And fetter him! Then into the blazing fire burn him! * Then tie him with a chain, of the length of seventy cubits!'"* [2]

In continuation of the aforesaid verse, it gives the reason why their Book is handed to them in their left stating:

﴿إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ۝٣٣ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ ٱلْمِسْكِينِ ۝٣٤ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ ٱلْيَوْمَ هَٰهُنَا حَمِيمٌ ۝٣٥﴾

1. Surah Al-Haqqah, verse 19 to 24.
2. Surah Al-Haqqah, verses 25 to 32.

*"Verily he used not to believe in God, the Great! * And he urged not the feeding of the poor; * So for him here today there is not a friend."*[1]

The above blessed verses mention two of their unpleasant attributes which are the same as those which have been referred to in the verses of *Surah 'Al-Muddassir'* as:

﴿قَالُوا۟ لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ ٱلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ ٱلْمِسْكِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾

The verses of *Surah "Al-Inshiqaq"* are among other verses that discuss the handing of the Book of Deeds in either the right or left hand wherein it states thus:

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِىَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِيَمِينِهِۦ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ وَيَنقَلِبُ إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهِۦ مَسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾﴾

*"And he who is given his Book in his right hand, * Soon shall he be reckoned (with) an easy reckoning, * And he shall return unto his people delighted."*[2]

The reckoning of people of the Right Hand is brief and easy; and assuming they have committed a few sins as well, but when weighed against their virtuous deeds, they do not add up to much so that after a brief assessment they enter Paradise. On that Day, a swift reckoning is indeed a great blessing. At times a human being waits in anticipation in the queue, and is kept waiting for long and gets very tired. If in such a situation, his job is done quickly, he becomes extremely happy. Now on that difficult Day of fifty thousand years, if a person's reckoning is brief, then certainly his joy is indescribable. In continuation of the same verses, the Qur'an gives a description of the opposite party thus:

1. Surah Al-Haqqah, verses 33 to 35.
2. Surah Al Inshiqaq, verses 7 to 9.

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ وَرَآءَ ظَهْرِهِۦ ۝١٠ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُواْ ثُبُورًا ۝١١ وَيَصْلَىٰ سَعِيرًا ۝١٢ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ فِيٓ أَهْلِهِۦ مَسْرُورًا ۝١٣ إِنَّهُۥ ظَنَّ أَن لَّن يَحُورَ ۝١٤﴾

*"And he who is given his Book (from) behind his back, * He shall invoke destruction, * And shall be committed to the flaming fire. * Verily he was joyous among his people. Verily he thought that never will he return (unto God)."*[1]

In the above verses, instead of the interpretation of the Book of Deeds being given in his left hand, it states that "his Book is given from behind his back" and there is no contradiction between the two which means that the Book of Deeds is given in his left hand from behind his back. We read in a narrative that, «إنَّهُ يُخرَجُ شِمالُهُ مِن ظَهرِهِ وَ يُعطى كتابَه فيه». They will split open his chest and his left hand will be made to pass through his chest and come out from behind his back, so that he receives his Book of Deeds in that position.

The reason for this agonizing situation was that he was joyous among his kith and kin for the sins that he committed and thought that there would never be a return (unto God) and resurrection. This is the same belief held by the people of the Left hand and the guilty mentioned in other verses.

In the holy Qur'an, the third occasion wherein it speaks of handing the Book of Deeds in the right hand, is in *Surah 'Bani Israel'* which states:

﴿يَوْمَ نَدْعُواْ كُلَّ أُنَاسٍۭ بِإِمَٰمِهِمْ ۖ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِيَمِينِهِۦ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَٰبَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ۝٧١ وَمَن كَانَ فِي هَٰذِهِۦٓ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي ٱلْأَخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ۝٧٢﴾

1. Surah Al-Inshiqaq, verses 10 to 14.

*"Remember the Day (of Judgment) when We will summon every people with their Imam (Leader): then whosoever is given his book in his right hand, these shall read their books (with pleasure) and they shall not be dealt with (even) a shred unjustly. * And whosoever is blind in this (life), he shall in the hereafter (also) be blind and gone further astray from the (right) way."*[1]

Every group of people without exception has a leader and head; Every group will be summoned with its Imam and leader.

However, there are two types of Imams: one is the Imam of guidance and the other is the Imam of misguidance. In the Glorious Qur'an, there are certain verses concerning these two types of Imams and spiritual leaders. There is reference to the Imam of guidance in two of the Surahs. On one occasion after mentioning the names of a number of the Divine Apostles and Prophets (SA) it states:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَـٰهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا﴾

"And We made them leaders, guiding (the people) by Our command…"[2]

And on another occasion, it states:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا﴾

"And of them made We Leaders (Imams) to guide (the people) by Our command …"[3]

The Imam referred to in the above verses is the Imam of the truth, who summons to the truth. There is also an Imam or leader of misguidance and deviation. He leads the disbelievers and invites the people to deviation. The Holy Qur'an refers to this group as «ائمّةَ كُفر» (leaders of infidelity) and in one verse issues the decree of Jihad against them stating:

1. Surah Bani Israel, verses 71 & 72.
2. Surah Al Anbiya, verse 73.
3. Surah As-Sajdah, verse 24.

﴿فَقَـٰتِلُوٓاْ أَئِمَّةَ ٱلۡكُفۡرِ﴾

"…then fight the leaders of infidelity …" [1]

In any case, in this verse the Qur'an states that on the Day of Judgment, every nation shall be resurrected with its leader – one group with their leader of righteousness and another with the leader of infidelity and wrong. Moses (SA) will lead his followers; the followers of the Pharaoh will be led by the Pharaoh. That the Imam or leader of every nation will lead them has been mentioned explicitly in yet another verse concerning the Pharaoh, wherein it states:

﴿وَلَقَدۡ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مُوسَىٰ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَا وَسُلۡطَـٰنٖ مُّبِينٍ ۝٩٦ إِلَىٰ فِرۡعَوۡنَ وَمَلَإِيْهِۦ فَٱتَّبَعُوٓاْ أَمۡرَ فِرۡعَوۡنَۖ وَمَآ أَمۡرُ فِرۡعَوۡنَ بِرَشِيدٖ ۝٩٧ يَقۡدُمُ قَوۡمَهُۥ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَـٰمَةِ فَأَوۡرَدَهُمُ ٱلنَّارَۖ وَبِئۡسَ ٱلۡوِرۡدُ ٱلۡمَوۡرُودُ ۝٩٨﴾

*"And indeed We sent Moses, with Our signs and an authority (which was) manifest, * Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they followed the bidding of Pharaoh; and Pharaoh's bidding was no right directive. * He shall lead his people on the Resurrection Day, and bring them down to (Hell) fire; but woeful will be the leading and the place led to."*[2]

A startling point has been made here which is that the Pharaoh moves in front of his nation and leads them into hell. It means that just as he was at their head in the world and had led them, in the next world he will take the lead as well and pave the way for their entry into the fire. Basically, the next world is a personification of a human being's deeds in this world. In this world, the Pharaoh guided his people towards the fire of misguidance, polytheism and infidelity and the Pharaoh will be their leader there as well, leading his nation into the

1. Surah Al Bara'at, verse 12.
2. Surah Hud, verses 96 to 98.

fire. Every group – good or bad – will be resurrected, and summoned with its own Imam (leader).

People of the Right Hand: Followers of the Imam of the Truth

Two groups have been presented in the above verses. The first group follows the Imam (leader) of Truth, the second group follows the Imam of misguidance and infidelity. However, the verse does not say who is and who is not the Imam of truth; rather, it refers to the issue in general.

Intercession will be applicable to those persons who will be among People of the Right Hand, those who obey the spiritual leader of truth; whereas, those who are among the people of the Left Hand and have followed the leader of misguidance and falsehood will not benefit from intercession of the intercessors.

Now, we will refer to the narratives as well. In connection with this verse, the followers of the Infallible Imams (AS) posed certain questions, including the one that 'Fadheel Bin Yasar' has narrated below:

«قال: سألت أبا جعفر (عليه السلام) عَن قَولِ الله: « يَومَ نَدعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإمَامِهِم ...» قَالَ جيءُ رَسُولُ الله (صل الله علیه واله وسلّم) فِی قَومِهِ و عَلِیٌّ (عليه السلام) فی قَومِهِ وَالحَسَنُ (عليه السلام) فی قَومِهِ وَالحُسَینُ (عليه السلام) فی قَومِهِ وَ کُلٌّ مَن ماتَ بَینَ ظَهرانیّ إمامٍ جاءَ مَعَهُ.»

"The narrator says: I asked Imam Baqer (AS) concerning the verse, "*Remember the Day (of Judgment) when We will summon every people with their Imam*". He stated: 'The Apostle of God (SA) will arrive in the company of his own nation; Imam Ali (AS) with his own nation; Imam Hassan (AS) with his own nation and Imam Hussein (AS) with his own nation. Any person who was among the followers of an Imam and died being a follower, will be resurrected with that particular Imam and arrive on the scene, on the Day of Judgment."[1]

1. Ayyashi's Exegesis, vol. 2, page 302 / Surah Bani Israel, / Narrative no. 114.

The point worth mentioning is that if the Apostle of God (SA) arrives on the scene of the Day of Resurrection with his own nation, then Imam Ali (AS) will be among the nation of the Apostle of God (SA). Similarly, Imam Ali (AS) was also the Imam of both Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hussein (AS). Imam Hassan (AS) was the Imam of Imam Hussein (AS). Imam Hussein (AS) was Imam of Imam Zain Al Abideen (AS). Each of the Imams (AS) in his own time was leader of the subsequent Imam and thus if on that Day the people are summoned with their respective Imams, there will not be any rift in the frontline of truth, since the group following the truth are linked to one another like a chain. Thus, the group of truth will all be together, if leadership that was present in this world is to find manifestation out there. However, in the frontline of falsehood, generally there is discord and disunity. The Pharaoh has nothing to do with Nimrod; Nimrod has nothing to do with Shadad nor has Yazeed got to do anything with Mu'awaiyah; rather, each of them has a nation and they will enter the arena with their respective nations.

عن الصادق (ع): «ألا تَمَدُون اللهَ إنَّهُ إذا كانَ يَومُ القِيامَة يُدعى كُلُّ قَومٍ إلى مَن يتولَّونَهُ وَ فَزَعنا الب رَسولِ الل (ص) وَ فَزعتُم أنتُم إلَينا»

Imam Sadiq (AS) is narrated to have stated: "Do you not give thanks to God because on the Day of Resurrection every nation will be ordered to rally round the person who they considered to be their guardian and head and had followed him. At that moment we will move towards the Apostle of God (SA) and you will come towards us."[1]

There is also another narrative from Imam Ridha (AS) in which he stated:

«إذا كانَ يَومُ القِيامَةِ، قال اللهُ آلَيسَ عَدلٌ مِن رَبَّكُم أن تُوَلُّو ا كُلَّ قَومٍ مَن تَولَّوا قالُوا بَلى قالَ: فَيَقُولُ تَمَيَّزُوافَيَتَمَيَّزُونَ.»

"On the Day of Resurrection, God Almighty states: 'Does not Divine justice demand that every nation that is present here should follow

1. Al Burhan Fee Tafseer Al Quran: vol. 2, page 431, Narrative no. 22.

and move behind the person whom they regarded as their legal guardian and leader in the world?' People reply in the affirmative. Then God states: 'So, divide!' (and every group follows its respective Imam). People separate from one another and form into groups."[1]

Recognizing the leaders of truth and falsehood

In other narratives which are longer than the aforesaid one, Imam Sadiq (AS) has discussed certain topics. Here, for the sake of brevity, we mention the latter half of the narrated tradition:

«... ثُمَّ يَخرُجَ مُنادٍ مِن عِندِ الرَّحمن فيقولُ: يا مَعشَرَ الخَلائِقِ! أليسَ العَدلُ مِن ربِّكُم أن يُوَلَّىَ كلُّ قَومٍ ما كانُو ا يَتوَلَّونَ فى دارالدنيا؟ فيَقُولُونَ: بلى وَاىُّ شَىءٍ عَدلٌ غَيرُهُ؟ قالَ: فَيَقُومُ الشَّيطانُ الذى أضَلَّ فِرقَةً مِن النّاس حَتّى زَعَمُوا أنّ عيسى هُوالله وَ ابنُ الله فَيَتَّبِعُونَهُ إلى النّارِ، وش يَقُومُ الشّيطانُ الذى أضَلَّ فِرقَةً مِنَ النّاس حَتّى زَعَمُوا أنّ عُزَيراً ابنُ الله حتّى يَتَّبِعُونَهُ إلى النّار وَ يَقُومُ كُلُّ شَيطانٍ أضَلّ فِرقَةً فَيَتَّبِعُونَهُ إلَى النّار حَتّى تَبقى هذِهِ الأُمَّة»

"…Thereafter a caller will call out on behalf of God, saying, 'O, people! Does not Divine justice demand that the Imam and leader of each faction should be the same person who was their leader in the world! And people respond saying: 'Yes, so should it be and what better justice than this! Then, Satan, who had deceived a number of people into believing that Jesus Christ was God and the son of God, gets up from his place and leads all his followers with him into the fire. Also, another Satan, who had misguided another group of people into believing that Ezra was the son of God gets up from his place and enters the fire with his followers. In the same way, any Satan who had led a faction astray, gets up from his place and leads his followers into the Fire, until finally, this nation (the nation of Islam) remains."

Up to this point, the narrative is concerned with the nations of the past. Also, it is not necessary for Satan to definitely be a devil belonging to the Jinn species; often it implies devils of the human

1. Ayyashi's Exegesis, vol. 2, page 304, Narrative no. 125.

species that led nations astray and were their leaders in the world, as was the case with Jesus Christ (AS) when a group of people considered him to be God or son of God. This incident occurred with the Islamic nation as well, and thus in continuation, the same narrative states:

«"ثُمَ يَخرُجُ مُنادٍ مِن عِندِالله فَيَقُول: يا مَعشَرَالخَلائِق! أَلَيسَ العدلُ مِن رَبّكُم أن ُوَلّىَ كُلُّ فَريقٍ مَن كانُوا يَتوَلَّونَ فى دارِالدُّنيا؟ فَيقُولُون: بلى، فيقومُ شَيطانٌ فَيَتَّبِعُهُ مَن كانَ يتو لاّه ثمّ يقومُ شَيطانٌ فَيَتَّبِعَهَ مَن كانَ يتولاّهُ ثمّ يقُومُ شَيطانٌ ثالثٌ فَيَتَّعُهُ مَن كان يتولاّه ثُمّ يقُومُ مُعاوِة فَيَتَّبعُهُ مَن كانَ يتولاّه وَ يقُومُ عَلِىٌّ (ع) فيتَّبِعُهُ مَن كانَ يتولاّهُ ثُمّ يزيد بن معاوية فَيَتَّبِعُهُ مَن كانَ يَتولاّهُ وَيقومُ الحسن (ع) فَيَتَّبِعُهُ مَن كانَ يَتولاّهُ وَيقومُ الحُسين (ع) فَيَتَّبِعُهَ مَن كانَ يتولاّهُ ثمّ يقُومُ مروانُ بنُ الحَكَم وَ عبدُالمَلِكِ فَيَتَّبِعُهُما مَن كانَ يَتولاّهماُ وَيقومُ علىٌّ بنُ الحُسين (ع) فَيَتَّبِعُهَ مَن كانَ يتولاّهُ ثمّ يقُومُ الوليدُ بنُ عبدالمَلِكِ وَ يقُومُ محمّدُ بنُ على (ع) فَيَتَّبِعُهُما مَن كانَ يَتولاّهماُ ثُمّ أقُومُ أنَا فَيَتَّبِعُنى مَن كانَ يَتولاّنى ... وَ يوتى بِالكُتُبِ فَنزجَعُ فَنَشهدُ عَلى عَدُوَّنا وَ نَشفَعُ لِمَن كانَ مِن شيعَتِنا مُرهِقا ...»

"Thereafter, the caller repeats the same question and the people answer in the affirmative. Then at that moment a devil gets up (from among the Muslim nations) and his followers gather behind him; and thereafter another devil gets up from his place and moves and his followers move behind him. At that moment Imam Ali (AS) stands up and thereafter Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hussein (AS) and thereafter, Marwan and Abdul Malik and then Imam Ali Bin Al Hussein (AS) and after him, Walid Bin Abdul Malik and thereafter, Imam Muhammad Bin Ali (AS) and followers of His Holiness follow suit as well. Thereafter, I, Imam Sadiq (AS) stand up and am followed by those who were my disciples and …the Books are brought and placed in view of the people, and we bear witness against

our enemies, and intercede for the wrongdoers from among our followers…" [1]

The narrative is extremely clear. In the nation of Islam too, those who illegitimately took over leadership of a group of people, will lead, with their followers behind them, just like the past nations, conspicuous examples of devils of the human species.

We have certain narratives which mention that intercession will apply to those who have followed Prophet Muhammad (SA) and his Household (AS).

قال الصادق (ع): «كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ يُحاسِبُها إمامُ زَمانِها وَ يَعرِفُ الأَئِمَّةُ أولِيائَهُم وَ أعدائَهُم بِسيماهُم وَ هُوقَولُهُ ﴿وَعَلَى ٱلْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ﴾ وَهُمُ الأَئِمَّةُ؛ يَعرِفُونَ كُلاًّ بِسيماهُم فَيُعطُوا أولِيائَهُم كِتابَهُم بِيَمِينِهِم فَيَمُرُّوا إلَى الجَنَّة بِلا حِسابٍ وَ يُعطُوا أعدائَهُم كِتابَهُم بِشِمالِهِم فَيَمُرُّوا إلى النّارِ بِلا حِسابٍ فَإذا نَظَرَ أولِيائُوهُم فى كِتابِهِم يَقُولُونَ لإِخوانِهِم: ﴿هَآؤُمُ ٱقْرَءُواْ كِتَـٰبِيَهْ ۝١٩ إِنِّى ظَنَنتُ أَنِّى مُلَـٰقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ ۝٢٠﴾

Imam Sadiq (AS) stated: "The reckoning of every nation is performed by its own contemporary Imam; and the Imams recognize their friends and foes from their faces, which is the same as that which God Almighty has stated in the glorious Qur'an: "*…and on the heights shall be men who know all by their marks.*"[2] They give the Book and the Book of Deeds to their friends in their right hand so that they enter paradise without reckoning; and they (likewise) give the book of deeds of their enemies in their left hand so that they enter hell without reckoning as well. Thus, when their friends read their book of deeds, each of them remarks to his brethren (out of sheer joy), '*come and*

1. Ayyashi's Exegesis, vol. 2, page 313 as narrated from Bihar Al Anwaar, vol. 8, page 46.
2 Surah Al A'raf, verse 46.

read my book of deeds; I was certain that one day I would be confronted with reckoning of my deeds."[1-2]

The second condition of intercession is that the person should not be a sinner or an oppressor and tyrant. The glorious Qur'an states thus:

﴿مَا لِلظَّـٰلِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ﴾

"…For the unjust there shall not be any sincere friend nor an intercessor who shall prevail." [3]

This verse has a general application and it means that every unjust person is denied intercession because the subject of the verse is not any particular individual or particular oppressor; rather, all oppressors are denied intercession. The Prophet of Islam (SA) stated:

«وَأمّا شَفاعَتی فَفی أصحابِ الکبائِرِ،ما خَلا أهل الشّرکِ وَالظُّلم»

"And my intercession does extend to perpetrators of grievous sins from my nation excepting those who subscribe to polytheism and injustice (for intercession does not apply to their circumstance)."[4]

No intercession for enemies of the Apostle of God's (SA) Household

In some of the narratives, it has been made explicit that those that are the enemies of the Household of the Prophet and the Ahl-al-Bayt of the Messenger of Islam (SA) will be deprived of intercession. Imam Sadiq (AS) stated:

«... وَلَو أنَّ المَلائِکَةَ المُقرّبین َوَالأَنبیاءَ المُرسلینَ شَفَّعُو ا فی ناصِبٍ ما شُفِّعُوا»

"If all the most proximate of Divine angels and apostles intercede on behalf of an enemy of the Ahl-Al-Bayt of the Apostle of Islam (SA), their intercession will not be accepted."[5]

1. Surah Al Haqqah, verses 19 & 20.
2. Nuru Ath-Thaqalain Exegesis: vol. 5, page 407 / Narrative no. 34.
3. Surah Ghafir, verse 18.
4. Khisal, vol. 2, page 355, Narrative no. 36.
5. Al Muhasin, page 184.

Similarly, the Prophet of Islam (SA) stated:

«إذا قُمتُ المقامَ المَحمُودَ تَشَفَّعتُ فی أصحابِ الکَبائِرِ مِن اُمّتی فَیُشفَّعُنِیَ اللهُ فیهم، وَاللهِ لا تَشَفّعتُ فِی مَن آذی ذُرِّیَّتی».

"I intercede on behalf of the perpetrators of grievous sins from my nation when I stand in the praised position; and God Almighty accepts my intercession concerning them. But I swear to God, I will not intercede on behalf of those who have offended my descendants."[1]

The 'praised position' is an extremely great station and as is evident from its name, it is an exalted position which Almighty God bestowed on His Apostle as a consequence of keeping nightly vigil, performing the optional supererogatory night prayer and nightly recitation of the Holy Qur'an. The Glorious Qur'an states:

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلَّيۡلِ فَتَهَجَّدۡ بِهِۦ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَبۡعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامٗا مَّحۡمُودٗا﴾

"And (in a part) of the night, forsake sleep for prayer, in addition to (what is incumbent on) thee; Maybe that thy Lord will exalt thee unto a position praised."[2] The 'position praised' is the same exalted rank of intercession.

His Holiness states: "I shall intercede on behalf of my nation's sinners when I am placed in 'the praised position'. However, I shall never intercede for those who have offended my descendants." His eminence takes an oath in order to emphasize the importance of the issue because such persons are unjust and the unjust are deprived of intercession.

Similarly, it is narrated that when Imam Hussein (AS) set out from Medina and went to Mecca, he saw the Messenger of Islam (SA) in his dream in which he stated to him:

1. Noor al- Thaqalayn Exegesis, vol. 3, page 207, Narrative 398.
2. Surah Bani Israel, verse79.

«حَبیبی یا حُسین! کَأنّی أراكَ عَن قَریبٍ مُرَمَّلاً بِدِمائِكَ مَذبُوحاً بِأرض کَربٍ وَ بَلاء مِن عِصابَةٍ مِن اُمَّتی وَ أنتَ مَعَ ذلِكَ عَطشانٌ لا تُسقی وَ ظَمآنٌ لا تُروی وَ هُم مَعَ ذلِكَ یَرجُونَ شَفاعَتی، لا أنالَهُمُ اللهُ شَفاعَتی یَومَ القِیمَةِ ...»

"O, my beloved Hussein! It is as if I am seeing you being soaked in your own blood very soon; and slain in the land of Karbala at the hands of a group of my nation; and you are not given water while you are thirsty; and they are still optimistic of my intercession despite this deed. God shall not favor them with my intercession." [1]

Another of the conditions of intercession is that the interceded person enjoys the approval and consent of God. The Glorious Qur'an states:

﴿یَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا تَنفَعُ ٱلشَّفَـٰعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَرَضِیَ لَهُۥ قَوْلاً﴾

"On that day shall avail not intercession (of any) save (that of) whom hath permitted God and whose words He is pleased with."

In yet another verse it states:

﴿وَكَم مِّن مَّلَكٍ فِی ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ لَا تُغْنِی شَفَـٰعَتُهُمْ شَیْـًٔا إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعْدِ أَن یَأْذَنَ ٱللَّهُ لِمَن یَشَآءُ وَیَرْضَىٰٓ﴾

"And how many an angel in heavens is whose intercession is of no avail at all save after permitteth by God, whomsoever He willeth and chooseth."[2]

The above two verses have specified God's consent in relation to the sinner as one of the conditions of intercession.

There are two opinions on the exegesis of the above two verses. One is that the exception pertains to the intercessor. In this case, the verse means that on the Day of Resurrection, the intercession of no person will be of any use unless God has granted the person permission to

1. Bihar al-Anwaar, vol. 4, page 327, Narrative no. 2.
2. Surah An Najm, verse 26.

intercede. Based on this opinion, the above two verses specify the conditions of the intercessor.

The second opinion is that the exception implies the sinful individual. In that case, the implication of the aforesaid verses would be close to that of the verse,

﴿وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ٱرْتَضَىٰ﴾

"and they can not intercede but for him whom He approveth" and ranks among those verses that mention the conditions of the person who is the object of intercession. However, herein it is not very clear what person and in what circumstances earns the pleasure of God and what are the conditions and details for His approval? But it goes without saying that God's consent is not arbitrary and without wisdom and expedience. God does not have ties of kinship with any person and it is not that He approves or disapproves of somebody without reason. God's consent in relation to any person depends on the beliefs, deeds, behavior and morals of that person. In the first place, his beliefs should be right and proper for morally correct beliefs causes God to be pleased with a person.

In the glorious Qur'an, God declares:

﴿وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ كَمَا ٱسْتَخْلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ ٱلَّذِى ٱرْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ﴾

"God hath promised unto those of you who believe and do good deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them, and that certainly He shall establish for them their religion (Islam) which He hath chosen for them …"[1]

From the above verse, it is evident that God does not approve of certain methods and beliefs and is not pleased with them. Thus, in order that a person's religion earns the consent of God, he

1. Surah An-Nur, verse 55.

undoubtedly needs to believe in God and His Attributes in a manner that is called for, as well as believe in the Day of Resurrection and the correct articles of faith. This is because you all know that there are a large number of deviant schools of thought and dogmas in the field of religion. A group of people do not reckon God to be just; another group believes in absolute predetermination, while some others believe in leaving the judgment to God. One group believes that God is corporeal and attribute corporeality to God saying – I seek refuge in God – He has eyes and hands, besides tens of other invalid and deviant ideas. All of them are beliefs that God does not approve of. Thus, in the first place a human being should have righteous beliefs that God is pleased with so that he earns the approval and consent of God. Thus, in a narrative concerning the same aforesaid verse, it is written that:

قال: «فقُلتُ للرّضا (ع): «يَا بنَ رَسُولِ الله (ع)، فَما مَعنى قَول الله عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ: « وَ لا يَشفَعُونَ إلاَّ لِمَن ارتَضى الله دينَهُ...»,وَ لا يَشفَعُونَ إلاَّ لِمَن ارتَضى ...»؟ قالَ: لا»

The narrator says that he asked Imam Ridha (AS): "Ya ibna Rasool Allah (SA), what is the meaning of the verse which states, 'and they can not intercede but for him whom He approveth…?' His Holiness replied: 'He (the intercessor) does not intercede except for the person whose religion has been approved by God.'"[1] Therefore, in the first place intercession applies to those persons whose religious and sectarian beliefs are correct and proper. In the previous chapter we said that, on the basis of the Qur'an's verses, the people of the Right Hand followed the leaders of truth in this world. The characteristics of the people show that those who do not believe in God and the Day of Judgment and deny the righteous beliefs, will be deprived of intercession. Thus, being a monotheist, being a believer, following leaders of truth and the Imams that are."guiding the people by Our command" «يَهدُونَ بِآمرنا». earns the approval of God for the sinner's beliefs and religion, and shall be the cause of intercession.

1. Surah Al A'raf, verse 46.

Yet another narrative has been transmitted from Imam Sadiq (AS) in the form of a letter and is actually a prescription for the followers. He writes:

«وَاعلَمُواأنَّه لَيسَ يُغنى عَنكُم مِنَ الله أحَدٌ مَن خَلقِهِ شَيئاً، لا مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ وَ لا نَبِىٌّ مُرسَلٌ وَ لا مِن دُونِ ذلِك. فَمَن سَرَّهُ أن يَنفَعَهُ شَفاعَةُ الشافِعينَ عِندَالله، فَليَطلُب إلَى الله اَن يَرضى عَنهُ.»

"Know that no creature of the creatures of God; neither the angels proximate to God nor the Apostles sent to communicate the messages nor others besides them, are in a position to make you become independent of God to the amount of a tiny grain. Thus, a person who would like the intercession of the intercessors to benefit him with God on the Day of Judgment should implore God to be pleased with him."[1]

Imam Sadiq (AS) gives an ultimatum to all his companions that no one should think because he has the Apostle of Islam (SA) or Imam Hussein (AS) on his side, he need not have to worry even if he does not have God on his side. No, this is not enough. If a person wishes to have Imam Hussein (AS) on his side must first have God on his side, and God's consent lies in following a religion which He approves of.

Here a question that is raised is that is it possible for God to be pleased with a person who does not offer the mandatory prayers, does not fast, does not perform the obligatory Hajj pilgrimage, does not pay 'Zakat' the alms tax and shuns all acts of worship? He testifies to the Oneness of Allah and the prophet hood of the Holy Prophet (SA), and Imam Ali (AS) as the 'Friend of God', but has not done anything, is not on the right track. He reckons himself to be a believer but has neither performed any of the prescribed religious obligations nor has he bowed in prostration to God even once. There are many such individuals. Can we say that the part of the verse which states: "but for him whom He (God) approveth …" shall apply to such a person? Definitely, the answer is in the negative. How can a person who has no relationship whatsoever with God, enjoy His approval? Moreover,

1. Ibid, vol. 53, Narration 7.

God's approval of the religion of any individual does not depend on the individual having proper beliefs; rather, his actions should be such that they gain His approval.

Consequence of persistence on sin

One also needs to bear in mind the point that sin and wrongdoing, as well as shunning worship of God and disobeying Divine commands lead to loss of faith. Cutting off relations with God and the Saints of God (AS) causes a person to lose even their primary belief. The Glorious Qur'an has explained the matter quite succinctly:

﴿ثُمَّ كَانَ عَـٰقِبَةَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسَـٰٓـُٔوا۟ ٱلسُّوٓأَىٰٓ أَن كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَـٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَكَانُوا۟ بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ﴾

"Then evil was the end of those who wrought evil, for belied they the signs of God and at them they used to mock."[1]

This is the same point that Her Holiness Zainab (AS) made in front of Yazid and quoted the above verse.

Occasionally, a person sins and then regrets it and repents. If he is negligent and commits the same sin, and repents again, is in touch with God, recites his ritual prayer, keeps the obligatory fasts, performs a number of the acts of worship and alongside, commits a fair amount of sins as well, his relations with God are not severed. However, at times there is a person who is totally absorbed by the material world and is among the " the vain talkers." He neither belies the Day of Judgment, nor says, "What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we even then indeed be again raised up?' And he does not worship idols and is not a polytheist, but has no acts of worship, ritual prayer, fasting, prostration, or supplication to God to his credit, so that the result is that he forfeits even those articles of faith which he had.

A person should not become arrogant and say, "I believe in the articles of faith; I am a believer in God; I worship God and I believe

1. Surah Ar-Room, verse 10.

in the Day of Resurrection," but does nothing to prove it; rather he shuns his religious duties and obligations causing his beliefs to weaken so that ultimately he loses them.

It is beneficial for a person if he dies a believer in these articles of faith; however, if these beliefs are missing in his heart and he has given them up either before his death or at the time of dying, he shall depart from this world an unbeliever. The impact of disobedience of Divine commandments is that it continuously weakens the beliefs and we do not know whether at the time of death we shall be accompanied with our beliefs or not.

In certain narratives it is mentioned that at the moment of death and passing away, Satan shows a pitcher of water to the person and tells him that if he wishes to drink of that refreshing water, he should give up his belief in God. Yes, Satan does not leave one alone until the very last moment of man's denial of unity of the Ultimate Reality and polytheism. He has vowed to lead all human beings astray saying: *"Then by Thy Might, I will certainly beguile them all."*

If a person persists in wrongdoing, Satan prevails over him throughout his lifetime. He tries to make him faithless by creating doubt; and just when the person begins to question the existence of God, the prophet and resurrection, right then everything is over for him, so that at the moment of dying, Satan most likely causes him to part with the small amount of faith that was left in him. Therefore, man should always be afraid of sin and not say to himself, 'I will sin and yet depart from this world a believer and with intercession, earn forgiveness of God.' No, one should always be fearful of sin, for sin makes one earn an eternal evil abode.

In any case, does a person whose beliefs are right and proper but who has no good deeds to his credit, be acceptable to God? It is difficult to assume that a person has proper beliefs but, at the same time, he has no acts of obedience of God to his credit. Now supposing if such a person does exist, he cannot be acceptable to God. God does not approve of such a person. Thus, our beliefs should be correct and we need to have good deeds to our credit, even though we, at times, commit a misdeed negligently.

Question: Is it possible that a human being who sins and commits a cardinal sin be approved?

Answer: Muhammad Bin Abi Ameer, one of the loyal, learned, and prominent companions of both Imam Sadiq (AS) and Imam Musa Bin Ja'far (AS), also asked this question. The authentic and reliable narrative that we have received states thus:

حدّثنا احمد بن زياد بن جعفر الهمدانیّ رضی الله عنه قال: حدّثنا علیّ بن اباهیم ابن هاشم، عن ابیه، عن محمّد بن أبی عُمَیرٍ قال: «سَمِعتُ مُوسَی بنَ جَعفَرٍ (ع) یَقُولُ: لا یُخَلَّدُ اللهُ فِی النّارِ إلاّ اَهلَ الکُفرِ وَالجُحُودِ وَ أهلَ الضَّلالِ وَ الشّرکِ وَ مَن اجتَنَبَ الکبا ئِرَ مِنَ المُئومِنینَ لَم یُسأل عَن الصَّغائِرِ قال اللهُ تبارك وَ تَعالی:﴿إِن تَجْتَنِبُواْ کَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُکَفِّرْ عَنکُمْ سَیِّئَاتِکُمْ وَنُدْخِلْکُم مُّدْخَلاً کَرِیمًا﴾

Ibn Abi Ameer is narrated to have said: "I heard from Imam Musa Bin Ja'far (AS): 'God does not make a person an inhabitant of the fire unless he is an infidel and a denier of the oneness of the Ultimate Reality, and of the deviant, and of the polytheist. While a believer, who avoids committing cardinal sins, is not called to account for his lesser sins because the Exalted God has stated: "*If ye avoid the great sins which ye are forbidden, We will expiate from you (smaller) misdeeds, and We will admit you (to Paradise), an honorable (place of) entry (it is indeed).*" [1]

Ibn Abi Ameer continues:

"قالَ: فَقُلتُ لَهُ: یَابنَ رَسُولِ الله ! فَالشَفاعَةُ لِمَن تَجِبُ مِنَ المُذنبین؟ فقالَ: حَدَّثَنی أبی عَن آبائِهِ عَن عَلیٍّ (ع) قال : سَمِعتُ رَسُولَ الله (ص) یَقُولُ: إنَّما شَفاعَتی لأهل الکَبائر مِن اُمَّتی فَاَمَّا المُحسِنُونَ مِنهُم فَما عَلَیهِم مِن سَبیلٍ."

"I said to His Holiness, "Ya ibna Rasool Allah, to which persons does intercession apply ? His Holiness replied: 'My father has narrated to me from his forefathers who narrated from Imam Ali (AS) that the

1. Surah An Nisa, verse 31. And Tauhid, Sadouq: vol. 6, page 407.

Apostle of God (SA) stated: 'My intercession is (reserved) for those of my nation who have committed grave sins; but there is no reason (for harsh treatment) of the virtuous from my nation (those who have not committed grave sins)." [1]

«يَابنَ رَسولِ اللهِ! فَكَيفَ تَكُونُ الشَّفاعَةُ لأهل الكَبائِرِ وَاللهُ تَعالى يَقُولُ:﴿وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ٱرْتَضَىٰ وَهُم مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهِۦ مُشْفِقُونَ﴾ وَ مَن يَرتَكِبُ الكَبائِرَ لا يَكُونُ مُرتَضى فَقال: يا أبا اَحمَد ! ما مِن مُئومِنٍ يَرتَكِبُ ذَنباً إلاّ ساءَهُ ذلِكَ وَنَدِمَ عَلَيهِ وَ قَد قالَ النَّبِيُ (ص): كَفى بِا لنَّدَمِ تَوبَةً وَ قال: مَن سَرَّتهُ حَسَنَتهُ وَ ساءَتهُ سَيِّئَتُهُ فَهُوَ مُومِنٌ فَمَن لَم يَندَم عَلى ذَنبٍ يَرتَكِبُهُ فَلَيسَ بِمُومِنٍ وَ لَم تَجِب لَهُ الشَفاعةُ وَ كانَ ظالِماً، وَ اللهُ تَعالى يَقُول: ﴿ مَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ﴾»

"Ya ibna Rassool Allah, how is it that intercession applies to those that have committed grave sins whereas the Almighty God states: *"…and they cannot intercede but for him whom He approveth, and they, of His fear, tremble"*, and thus a person who commits grave sins cannot enjoy the approval of God? His Holiness stated: "O, Abu Ahmad! (nom-de-plume of Ibn Abi Ameer) there is no believer that is not repentant and distressed for having committed a sin, and the Messenger of God (SA) stated that remorse is sufficient for atonement. He also stated that a person whose good deeds make him happy and his evil deeds makes him sorrowful is a believer;[2] whereas a person who does not regret and become sorrowful for the sin he has committed is not a believer so that intercession shall not apply to him, for he is considered an unjust person. The Almighty God has also stated: *"…For the unjust there shall not be any sincere friend nor an intercessor that shall prevail."* "

1. Tauhid, Sadouq, vol. 6, page 407: in Bihar Al Anwaar the word «المُئومِنين» has been mentioned instead of the word «المُذنِبين» (vol. 8, page 351).

2. In some of the copies it is mentioned thus:

« مَن سَرَّتهُ حَسَنَتهُ وَ ساءَتهُ سَيِّئَتُهُ فَهُوَ مُئومِنٌ»

In this part of the narrative there is mention of two types of human beings: one is sensitive and is deeply affected by sin and is pleased by good deed whereas, another not only commits sin and is not afraid of wrongdoing; rather, he at times gets pleasure out of committing sin. For example, he takes delight at cheating people of their properties or slapping somebody on the face. God forbid that a human being should reach this stage. Individuals of the first type are believers while the second type are not believers; rather they are tyrants and are deprived of intercession. Even if they commit a misdeed, believing individuals are remorseful and this remorse shows that they still have faith inside them and thus, they are acceptable to God and qualify for intercession.

However, remorse alone is not complete repentance for in addition to remorse, repentance demands resolve not to return to old ways, and the individual must decide not to repeat his misdeed and to ask God's forgiveness. Six conditions have been mentioned in the statement of the Commander of the believers (AS) concerning 'repentance'[1] and an individual needs to possess at least one of them, which is 'regret and remorse'.

Imam Kazim's (AS) statements, aroused another question in the narrator's mind and he asked in astonishment:

«قالَ: فَقُلتُ لَهُ: يَابنَ رَسُولِ الله وَ كَيفَ لا يكُونُ مُئومِناً مَن لَم يَندَم عَلى ذَنبٍ يَرتَكِبُهُ؟ فَقال: يا أبا اَحمَد ! ما مِن أحَدٍ يَرتَكِبُ كَبيرَةً مِنَ المَعاصى وَ هُوَ يَعلَمُ أنَّهُ سَيُعاقَبُ عَلَيها ، إلاّ نَدِمَ عَلى مَاارتَكَبَ وَ مَتى نَدِمَ كانَ تا ئِباً مُستَحِقاً لِلشَفاعَةِ وَ مَتى لَم يَندَم عَلَيها كانَ مُصِرّاً وَالمُصِرُّ لا يُغفَرُ لَهُ لأ نَّهُ غَيرُ مُؤمِنٍ بِعُقُوبَةِ مَا ارتَكَبَ وَلَو كانَ مُؤمِناً بِالعُقُوبَةِ لَنَدِمَ وَ قَد قالَ النبِيُّ (ص) لا كبيرَةَ مَعَ الإستِغفارِ وَ لا صَغيرَةَ مَعَ الإصرارِ»

"Ya ibna Rasool Allah! How is it that a person who does not repent for the sin he has committed not be considered to be a believer? His Holiness replied, "O, Abu Ahmad! There is no person who commits a grave sin and is aware that soon he is to face punishment for it but feels remorse for what he has done; and, he repents for that deed, and

1. Nahj al Balaghah of Sobhi Saleh, Narrative no. 417.

he shall deserve intercession. However, if he does not become remorseful, he persists on wrongdoing because he does not believe in the retribution of his sin; for, if he believed in the punishment, he would feel regret and remorse for having committed the sin. The Messenger of Islam (SA) had stated that the grave sin is cleared after a person implores God for forgiveness while persistence on committing the wrongdoing causes it to be no longer regarded a lesser sin and transforms it into a grave sin."[1]

If you take note, the same holds true for retribution of worldly affairs. If a person does a thing knowing that he would be in great trouble, he would regret doing it and censure himself. A person who deliberately eats a certain food knowing that it would land him in hospital, reproaches himself for having consumed it. In any case, if a person knows that he faces certain punishment and believes in retribution and punishment, he would surely regret his sin; whereas, if he does not regret it, then it becomes evident that he does not believe in retribution. In order to clarify the issue further, His Holiness states thus:

«وَ اَمّا قَولُ اللهِ :﴿وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ٱرْتَضَىٰ ﴾؟ فَإنَّهُم لا يَشفَعُونَ إلاَّ لِمَن ارتَضى اللهُ دينَهُ وَالدّينُ: الإقرارُ بِالجزاءِ عَلَى الحَسَناتِ وَ السَّيِّئاتِ وَ مَن ارتَضَى اللهُ دينَهُ نَدِمَ عَلى مَا يَرتَكِبُهُ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ لِمَعرِفَتِهِ بِعاقِبَتِهِ فِى القِيامَةِ.»

But the verse, "*he does not intercede except for him whom God approveth…*", means that they do not intercede except for those whose religion is approved by God and religion comprises of confession and faith in retribution for good and evil deeds. A person whose religion is approved by God becomes remorseful and penitent for the sins that he commits because he is aware and convinced of the retribution of his sins on the Day of Resurrection." [2]

A blessed *(Hadith)*, narrated tradition, transmitted from His Holiness the Commander of the Believers (AS) states: "The flesh and skin that

1. Bihar Al Anwaar, vol. 8, page 352.
2. Ibid.

develops in a human being's body, as a result of sin, needs to be melted and destroyed."

We hope that God Almighty grants us succor so that when we depart from this world, we are among those that merit intercession of the Prophet of God (Blessings of Allah is upon him and his descendants). Having this optimism and seeking intercession itself creates a kind of potential and establishes a kind of communication with the Divine saints and the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) … and finally, praise is God's, the Lord of the worlds.

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